

Merry
Christmas
Don Christian
from

Santa Claus

Dec. 25, 1928

A DOG OF FLANDERS

A STORY OF NOËL

A DOG OF FLANDERS

A Christmas Story

BY
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("OUIDA")

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CHAPTER I.

HOME OF THE ORPHANS



NELLO and Patrasche were left all alone in the world.

They were friends in a friendship closer than brotherhood.

Nello was a little Ardennois; Patrasche was a big Fleming. They were both of the same age by length of years, yet one was still young, and the other was already old. They had dwelt together almost all their days: both were orphaned and destitute, and owed their

lives to the same hand. It had been the beginning of the tie between them, their first bond of sympathy; and it had strengthened day by day, and had grown with their growth, firm and indissoluble, until they loved one another very greatly.

Their home was a little hut on the edge of a little village—a Flemish village a league from Antwerp, set amidst flat breadths of pasture and corn-lands, with long lines of poplars and of alders bending in the breeze on the edge of the great canal which ran through it. It had about a score of houses and homesteads, with shutters of bright green or sky-blue, and roofs rose-red or black and white, and walls whitewashed until they shone in the sun like snow. In the centre of the village stood a windmill, placed on a little moss-grown slope: it was a landmark to all the level country round. It had once been painted scarlet, sails and all, but that had been in its infancy, half a

century or more earlier, when it had ground wheat for the soldiers of Napoleon; and it was now a ruddy brown, tanned by wind and weather. It went queerly, by fits and starts, as though rheumatic and stiff in the joints from age, but it served the whole neighborhood, which would have thought it almost as impious to carry grain elsewhere as to attend any other religious service than the mass that was preformed at the altar of the little old gray church, with its conical steeple, which stood opposite to it, and whose single bell rang morning, noon, and night with that strange, subdued, hollow sadness which every bell that hangs in the Low Countries seems to gain as an integral part of its melody.

Within sound of the little melancholy clock, almost from their birth upward, they had dwelt together, Nello and Patrasche, in the little hut on the edge of the village, with the cathedral spire of Antwerp rising

in the north-east, beyond the great green plain of seeding grass and spreading corn that stretched away from them like a tideless, changeless sea. It was the hut of a very old man, of a very poor man—of old Jehan Daas, who in his time had been a soldier, and who remembered the wars that had trampled the country as oxen tread down the furrows, and who had brought from his service nothing except a wound, which had made him a cripple.

When old Jehan Daas had reached his full eighty, his daughter had died in the Ardennes, hard by Stavelot, and had left him in legacy her two-year-old son. The old man could ill contrive to support himself, but he took up the additional burden uncomplainingly, and it soon became welcome and precious to him. Little Nello—which was but a pet diminutive for Nicolas—throve with him, and the old man and the little child lived in the poor little hut contentedly.

It was a very humble little mud-hut indeed, but it was clean and white as a shell, and stood in a small plot of garden-ground that yielded beans and herbs and pumpkins. They were very poor, terribly poor—many a day they had nothing at all to eat. They never by any chance had enough: to have had enough to eat would have been to have reached paradise at once. But the old man was very gentle and good to to the boy, and the boy was a beautiful, innocent, truthful, tender-natured creature; and they were happy on a crust and a few leaves of cabbage, and asked no more of earth or heaven; save indeed that Patrasche should be always with them, since without Patrasche, where would they have been?

For Patrasche was their alpha and omega; their treasury and granary; their store of gold and wand of wealth; their breadwinner and minister; their only friend and comforter. Patrasche dead or gone from

them, they must have laid themselves down and died likewise. Patrasche was body, brains, hands, head, and feet to both of them: Patrasche was their very life, their very soul. For Jehan Daas was old and a cripple, and Nello was but a child; and Patrasche was their dog.



CHAPTER II.

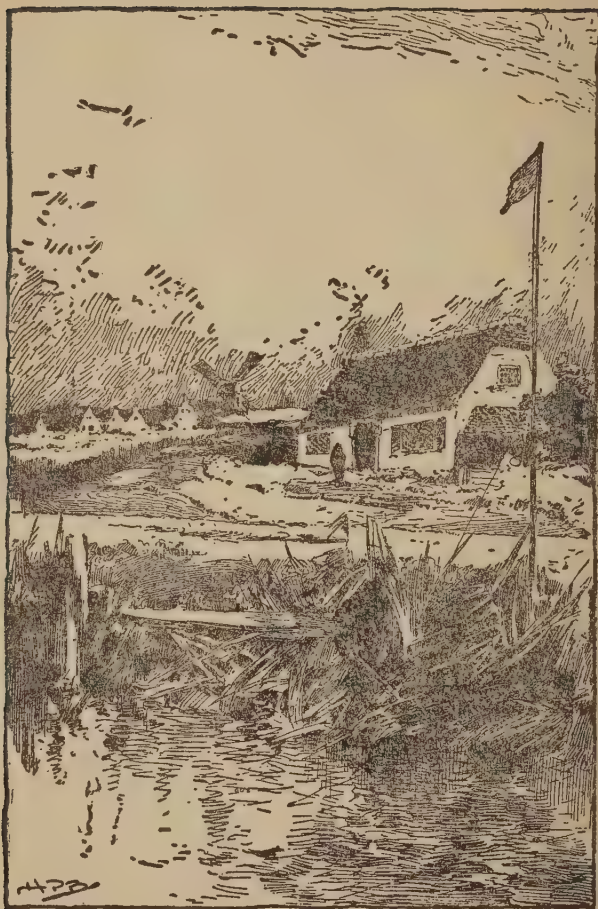
A BEAST OF BURDEN.

A dog of Flanders — yellow of hide, large of head and limb, with wolf-like ears that stood erect, and legs bowed and feet widened in the muscular development wrought in his breed by many generations of hard service. Patrasche came of a race which had toiled hard and cruelly from sire to son in Flanders many a century — slaves of slaves, dogs of the people, beasts of the shafts and the harness, creatures that lived straining their sinews in the gall of the cart, and died breaking their hearts on the flints of the streets.

Patrasche had been born of parents who had labored hard all their days over the sharp-set stones of the various cities and the long, shadowless, weary roads of the two Flanders and of Brabant. He had been born to no

other heritage than those of pain and of toil. He had been fed on curses and baptized with blows. Why not? It was a Christian country, and Patrasche was but a dog. Before he was fully grown he had known the bitter gall of the cart and the collar. Before he had entered his thirteenth month he had become the property of a hardware dealer, who was accustomed to wander over the land north and south, from the blue sea to the green mountains. They sold him for a small price because he was so young.

This man was a drunkard and a brute. The life of Patrasche was a life of hell. To deal the tortures of hell on the animal creation is a way which the Christians have of showing their belief in it. His purchaser was a sullen, ill-living, brutal Brabantois, who heaped his cart full with pots and pans and flagons and buckets and other wares of crockery and brass and tin, and left Patrasche to draw the load as best he might, whilst he himself lounged



idly by the side in fat and sluggish ease, smoking his black pipe and stopping at every wine-shop or cafe on the road.

Happily for Patrasche — or unhappily — he was very strong: he came of an iron race, long born and bred to such cruel travail, so that he did not die, but managed to drag on a wretched existence under the brutal burdens, the scarifying lashes, the hunger, the thirst, the blows, the curses, and the exhaustion which are the only wages with which the Flemings repay the most patient and laborious of all their four-footed victims. One day, after two years of this long and deadly agony, Patrasche was going on as usual along one of the straight, dusty, unlovely roads that lead to the city of Rubens. It was full midsummer, and very warm. His cart was very heavy, piled high with goods in metal and in earthenware. His owner sauntered on without noticing him otherwise than by the crack of the whip as it curled round his quivering loins.



The Brabantois had paused to drink beer himself at every wayside house, but he had forbidden Patrasche to stop a moment for a draught from the canal. Going along thus, in the full sun, on a scorching highway, having eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, and, which was far worse to him, not having tasted water for nearly twelve, being blind with dust, sore with blows, and stupefied with the merciless weight which dragged upon his loins, Patrasche, for once, staggered and foamed a little at the mouth, and fell.

He fell in the middle of the white, dusty road, in the full glare of the sun: he was sick unto death, and motionless. His master gave him the only medicine in his pharmacy — kicks and oaths and blows with a cudgel of oak, which had been often the only food and drink, the only wage and reward, ever offered to him. But Patrasche was beyond the reach of any torture, or of any curses. Patrasche lay, dead to all appearances, down in the white

powder of the summer dust. After a while, finding it useless to assail his ribs with punishment and his ears with maledictions, the Brabantois — deeming life gone in him, or going so nearly that his carcass was forever useless, unless indeed some one should strip it of the skin for gloves — cursed him fiercely in farewell, struck off the leathern bands of the harness, kicked his body heavily aside into the grass, and, groaning and muttering in savage wrath, pushed the cart lazily along the road up hill, and left the dying dog there for the ants to sting and for the crows to pick.

It was the last day before Kermesse, away at Louvain, and the Brabantois was in haste to reach the fair and get a good place for his truck of brass wares. He was in fierce wrath, because Patrasche had been a strong and much-enduring animal, and because he himself had now the hard task of pushing his charette all the way to Louvain. But to stay to look after Patrasche never entered his

thoughts: the beast was dying and useless, and he would steal, to replace him, the first large dog that he found wandering alone out of sight of its master. Patrasche had cost him nothing, or next to nothing; and for two long, cruel years he had made him toil ceaselessly in his service from sunrise to sunset, through summer and winter, in fair weather and foul.

He had got a fair use and a good profit out of Patrasche; being human, he was wise, and left the dog to draw his last breath alone in the ditch, and have his bloodshot eyes plucked out as they might be by the birds, whilst he himself went on his way to beg and to steal, to eat and to drink, to dance and to sing, in the mirth at Louvain. A dying dog, a dog of the cart—why should he waste hours over its agonies at peril of losing a handful of copper coins, at peril of a shout of laughter?

Patrasche lay there, flung in the grass-green ditch. It was a busy road that day,

and hundreds of people, on foot and on mules, in wagons or in carts, went by, tramping quickly and joyously on to Louvain. Some saw him; most did not even look: all passed on. A dead dog more or less — it was nothing in Brabant: it would be nothing anywhere in the world.



CHAPTER III.

FINDS FRIENDS AT LAST.

After a time, amongst the holiday-makers, there came a little old man who was bent and lame and very feeble. He was in no guise for feasting: he was very poorly and miserably clad, and he dragged his silent way slowly through the dust amongst the pleasure-seekers. He looked at Patrasche, paused, wondered, turned aside, then kneeled down in the rank grass and weeds of the ditch, and surveyed the dog with kindly eyes of pity. There was with him a little rosy, fair-haired, dark-eyed child of a few years old, who pattered in amidst the bushes that were for him breast-high, and stood gazing with a pretty seriousness upon the poor great, quiet beast.

Thus it was that these two first met — the little Nello and the big Patrasche.



The upshot of that day was, that old Jehan Daas, with much laborious effort, drew the sufferer homeward to his own little hut, which was a stone's throw off amidst the fields, and there tended him with so much care that the sickness, which had been a brain-seizure, brought on by heat and thirst and exhaustion, with time and shade and rest passed away, and health and strength returned, and Patrasche staggered up again upon his four stout, tawny legs.

Now for many weeks he had been useless, powerless, sore, near to death; but all this time he had heard no rough word, had felt no harsh touch, but only the pitying murmurs of the little child's voice and the soothing caress of the old man's hand.

In his sickness they too had grown to care for him, this lonely old man and the little happy child. He had a corner of the hut, with a heap of dry grass for his bed; and they had learned to listen eagerly for his

breathing in the dark night, to tell them that he lived; and when he first was well enough to essay a loud, hollow, broken bay, they laughed aloud, and almost wept together for joy at such a sign of his sure restoration; and little Nello, in delighted glee, hung round his rugged neck with chains of marguerites, and kissed him with fresh and ruddy lips.

So, then, when Patrasche arose himself again, strong, big, gaunt, powerful, his great wistful eyes had a gentle astonishment in them that there were no curses to rouse him, and no blows to drive him; and his heart awakened to a mighty love, which never wavered once in its fidelity whilst life abode with him.

But Patrasche, being a dog, was grateful. Patrasche lay pondering long with grave, tender, musing brown eyes, watching the movements of his friends.

Now, the old soldier, Jehan Daas, could do nothing for his living but limp about a little

with a small cart, with which he carried daily the milk-cans of those happier neighbors who owned cattle away into the town of Antwerp. The villagers gave him the employment a little out of charity — more because it suited them well to send their milk into the town by so honest a carrier, and bide at home themselves to look after their gardens, their cows, their poultry, or their little fields. But it was becoming hard work for the old man. He was eighty-three, and Antwerp was a good league off, or more.

Patrasche watched the milk-cans come and go that one day when he had got well and was lying in the sun with the wreath of marguerites round his tawny neck.

The next morning Patrasche, before the old man had touched the cart, arose and walked to it, and placed himself betwixt its handles, and testified as plainly as dumb show could do his desire and his ability to work



in return for the bread of charity that he had eaten.

Jehan Daas resisted long, for the old man was one of those who thought it a foul shame to bind dogs to labor for which nature never formed them. But Patrasche would not be gainsaid: finding they did not harness him, he tried to draw the cart onward with his teeth.

At length Jehan Daas gave way, vanquished by the persistence and the gratitude of this creature whom he had succored. He fashioned his cart so that Patrasche could run in it, and this he did every morning of his life thenceforward.

When the winter came Jehan Daas thanked the blessed fortune that had brought him to the dying dog in the ditch that fair-day of Louvain; for he was very old, and he grew feebler with each year, and he would ill have known how to pull his load of milk-cans over the snows and through the deep ruts in the

mud if it had not been for the strength and the industry of the animal he had befriended. As for Patrasche, it seemed heaven to him. After the frightful burdens that his old master had compelled him to strain under, at the call of the whip at every step, it seemed nothing to him but amusement to step out with this little light green cart, with its bright brass cans, by the side of the gentle old man who always paid him with a tender caress and with a kindly word. Besides, his work was over by three or four in the day, and after that time he was free to do as he would—to stretch himself, to sleep in the sun, to wander in the fields, to romp with the young child, or to play with his fellow-dogs. Patrasche was very happy.

Fortunately for his peace, his former owner was killed in a drunken brawl at the kermesse of Mechlin, and so sought not after him nor disturbed him in his new and well-loved home.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS YOUNG MASTER.

A few years later old Jehan Daas, who had always been a cripple, became so paralyzed with rheumatism that it was impossible for him to go out with the cart any more. Then little Nello, being now grown to his sixth year of age, and knowing the town well from having accompanied his grandfather so many times, took his place beside the cart, and sold the milk and received the coins in exchange, and brought them back to their respective owners with a pretty grace and seriousness which charmed all who beheld him.

The little Ardennois was a beautiful child, with dark, grave, tender eyes, and a lovely bloom upon his face, and fair locks that clustered to his throat; and many an artist sketched the group as it went by him — the

green cart with the brass flagons of Teniers and Mieris and Van Tal, and the great tawny-colored, massive dog, with his belled harness that chimed cheerily as he went, and the small figure that ran beside him, which had little white feet in great wooden shoes, and a soft, grave, innocent, happy face like the little fair children of Rubens.

Nello and Patrasche did the work so well and so joyfully together, that Jehan Daas himself, when the summer came and he was better again, had no need to stir out, but could sit in the doorway in the sun and see them go forth through the garden wicket, and then doze and dream and pray a little, and then awake again as the clock tolled three, and watch for their return. And on their return Patrasche would shake himself free of his harness with a bay of glee, and Nello would recount with pride the doings of the day; and they would all go in together to their meal of rye-bread and milk or soup,

and would see the shadows lengthen over the great plain, and see the twilight veil the fair cathedral spire; and then lie down together to sleep peacefully while the old man said a prayer.

So the days and the years went on, and the lives of Nello and Patrasche were happy, innocent, and healthful.

In the spring and summer especially were they glad. Flanders is not a lovely land, and around the burgh of Rubens it is perhaps least lovely of all. Corn and colza, pasture and plough, succeed each other on the characterless plain in wearying repetition, and save by some gaunt gray tower, with its peal of pathetic bells, or some figure coming athwart the fields, made picturesque by a gleaner's bundle or a woodman's fagot, there is no change, no variety, no beauty, anywhere; and he who has dwelt upon the mountains or amidst the forests feels oppressed as by imprisonment with the tedium and the endless-



ness of that vast and dreary level. But it is green and very fertile, and it has wide horizons that have a certain charm of their own in their dullness and monotony; and amongst the rushes by the water-side the flowers grow and the trees rise tall and fresh where the barges glide with their great hulks black against the sun, and their little green barrels and vari-colored flags gay against the leaves. Anyway, there is greenery and breadth of space enough to be as good as beauty to a child and a dog; and these two asked no better, when their work was done, than to lie buried in the lush grasses on the side of the canal, and watch the cumbrous vessels drifting by and bringing the crisp salt smell of the sea amongst the blossoming scents of the country summer.

True, in the winter it was harder, and they had to rise in the darkness and the bitter cold, and they had seldom as much as they could have eaten any day, and the hut was scarce

better than a shed when the nights were cold, although it looked so pretty in warm weather, buried in a great kindly clambering vine, that never bore fruit, indeed, but which covered it with luxuriant green tracery all through the months of blossom and harvest. In winter the winds found many holes in the walls of the poor little hut, and the vine was black and leafless, and the bare lands looked very bleak and drear without, and sometimes within the floor was flooded and then frozen. In winter it was hard, and the snow numbed the little white limbs of Nello, and the icicles cut the brave, untiring feet of Patrasche.

But even then they were never heard to lament, either of them. The child's wooden shoes and the dog's four legs would trot manfully together over the frozen fields to the chime of the bells on the harness; and then sometimes, in the streets of Antwerp, some housewife would bring them a bowl of soup and a handful of bread, or some kindly trader

would throw some billets of fuel into the little cart as it went homeward, or some woman in the village would bid them keep some share of the milk they carried for their own food; and then they would run over the white lands, through the early darkness, bright and happy, and burst with a shout of joy into their home.

So, on the whole, it was well with them, very well; and Patrasche, meeting on the highway or in the public streets the many dogs who toiled from daybreak into nightfall, paid only with blows and curses, and loosened from the shafts with a kick to starve and freeze as best they might — Patrasche in his heart was very grateful to his fate, and thought it the fairest and the kindest the world could hold. Though he was often very hungry indeed when he lay down at night; though he had to work in the heats of summer noons and the rasping chills of winter dawns; though his feet were often tender with wounds from the sharp edges of the jagged pavements;

though he had to perform tasks beyond his strength and against his nature — yet he was grateful and content: he did his duty with each day, and the eyes that he loved smiled down on him. It was sufficient for Patrasche.



CHAPTER V.

RUBENS, THE GREAT ARTIST.

There was only one thing which caused Patrasche any uneasiness in his life, and it was this: Antwerp, as all the world knows, is full at every turn of old piles of stones, dark and ancient and majestic, standing in crooked courts, jammed against gate-ways and taverns, rising by the water's edge, with bells ringing above them in the air, and ever and again out of their arched doors a swell of music pealing. There they remain, the grand old sanctuaries of the past, shut in amidst the squalor, the hurry, the crowds, the unloveliness, and the commerce of the modern world, and all day long the clouds drift and the birds circle and the winds sigh around them, and beneath the earth at their feet there sleeps —
RUBENS.

And the greatness of the mighty Master still rests upon Antwerp, and wherever we turn in its narrow streets his glory lies therein, so that all mean things are thereby transfigured; and as we pace slowly through the winding ways, and by the edge of the stagnant water, and through the noisome courts, his spirit abides with us, and the heroic beauty of his visions is about us, and the stones that once felt his footsteps and bore his shadow seem to arise and speak of him with living voices. For the city which is the tomb of Rubens still lives to us through him, and him alone.

It is so quiet there by that great white sepulchre — so quiet, save only when the organ peals and the choir cries aloud *Salva Regina* or the *Kyrie Eleison*. Sure no artist ever had a greater gravestone than that pure marble sanctuary gives to him in the heart of his birthplace in the chancel of St. Jacques.

Without Rubens, what were Antwerp? A

dirty, dusky, bustling mart which no man would ever care to look upon save the traders who do business on its wharves. With Rubens, to the whole world of men it is a sacred name, a sacred soil, a Bethlehem where a god of Art saw light, a Golgotha where a god of Art lies dead.

O nations! closely should you treasure your great men, for by them alone will the future know of you. Flanders in her generations has been wise. In his life she glorified this greatest of her sons, and in his death she magnifies his name. But her wisdom is very rare.

CHAPTER VI.

TROUBLES OF PATRASCHE.

Now the trouble of Patrasche was this. Into these great, sad piles of stones, that reared their melancholy majesty above the crowded roofs, the child Nello would many and many a time enter, and disappear through their dark, arched portals, whilst Patrasche, left without upon the pavement, would wearily and vainly ponder on what could be the charm which thus allured from him his inseparable and beloved companion. Once or twice he did essay to see for himself, clattering up the steps with his milk-cart behind him; but thereon he had been always sent back again summarily by a tall custodian in black clothes and silver chains of office; and fearful of bringing his little master into trouble, he desisted, and remained couched patiently



before the churches until such time as the boy reappeared. It was not the fact of his going into them which disturbed Patrasche: he knew that people went to church: all the village went to the small, tumble-down, gray pile opposite the red wind-mill. What troubled him was that little Nello always looked strangely when he came out, always very flushed or very pale; and whenever he returned home after such visitations, would sit silent and dreaming, not caring to play, but gazing out at the evening skies beyond the line of the canal, very subdued, and almost sad.

What was it? wondered Patrasche. He thought it could not be good or natural for the little lad to be so grave, and in his dumb fashion he tried all he could to keep Nello by him in the sunny fields or in the busy market-place. But to the churches Nello would go: most often of all would he go to the great cathedral; and Patrasche, left without on

the stones by the iron fragments of Quentin Matsys' gate, would stretch himself and yawn and sigh, and even howl now and then, all in vain, until the doors closed, and the child perforce came forth again, and winding his arms about the dog's neck would kiss him on his broad, tawny-colored forehead, and murmur always the same words, "If I could only see them, Patrasche! — if I could only see them!"

What were they? pondered Patrasche, looking up with large, wistful, sympathetic eyes.

One day, when the custodian was out of the way and the doors left ajar, he got in for a moment after his little friend, and saw. "They" were two great covered pictures on either side of the choir.

Nello was kneeling, rapt as in an ecstasy, before the altar-picture of the Assumption, and when he noticed Patrasche, and rose and drew the dog gently out into the air, his face

was wept with tears, and he looked up at the veiled places as he passed them, and murmured to his companion, "It is so terrible not to see them, Patrasche, just because one is poor and cannot pay! He never meant that the poor should not see them when he painted them, I am sure. He would have had us see them any day, every day: that I am sure. And they keep them shrouded there — shrouded in the dark, the beautiful things!— and they never feel the light, and no eyes look on them, unless rich people come and pay. If I could only see them, I would be content to die."

But he could not see them, and Patrasche could not help him, for to gain the silver piece that the church exacts as the price for looking on the glories of the Elevation of the Cross and the Descent from the Cross was a thing as utterly beyond the powers of either of them as it would have been to scale the heights of the cathedral spire. They had never so much as a sou to spare: if they



cleared enough to get a little wood for the stove, a little broth for the pot, it was the utmost they could do. And yet the heart of the child was set in sore and endless longing upon beholding the greatness of the two veiled Rubens.



CHAPTER VII.

A PASSION FOR ART.

The whole soul of the little Ardennois thrilled and stirred with an absorbing passion for Art. Going on his ways through the old city in the early days before the sun or the people had risen, Nello, who looked only a little peasant-boy, with a great dog drawing milk to sell from door to door, was in a heaven of dreams whereof Rubens was the god. Nello, cold and hungry, with stockingless feet, in of wooden shoes, and the winter winds blowing amongst his curls and lifting his poor, thin garments, was in a rapture of meditation, wherein all that he saw was the beautiful, fair face of the Mary of the Assumption, with the waves of golden hair lying upon her shoulders, and the light of an eternal sun shining down upon her brow. Nello, reared



in poverty, and buffeted by fortune, and untaught in letters, and unheeded by men, had the compensation or the curse which is called Genius.

No one knew it. He as little as any. No one knew it. Only indeed Patrasche, who being with him always, saw him draw with chalk upon the stones any and every thing that grew or breathed; heard him on his little bed of hay murmur all manner of timid, pathetic prayers to the spirit of the great Master; watched his gaze darken and his face radiate at the evening glow of sunset, or the rosy rising of the dawn; and felt many and many a time the tears of a strange, nameless pain and joy, mingled together, fall hotly from the bright young eyes upon his own wrinkled, yellow forehead.

“I should go to my grave quite content if I thought, Nello, that when thou growest a man thou couldst own this hut and the little plot of ground, and labor for thyself, and be

called Baas by thy neighbors," said the old man Jehan many an hour from his bed. For to own a bit of soil, and to be called Baas — master — by the hamlet round, is to have achieved the highest ideal of a Flemish peasant; and the old soldier, who had wandered over all the earth in his youth, and had brought nothing back, deemed in his old age that to live and die on one spot in contented humility was the fairest fate he could desire for his darling. But Nello said nothing.

The same leaven was working in him that in other times begat Rubens and Jordaens and the Van Eycks, and all their wondrous tribe, and in times more recent begat in the green country of the Ardennes, where the Meuse washes the old walls of Dijon, the great artist of Patroclus, whose genius is too near us for us aright to measure its divinity.

Nello dreamed of other things in the future than of tilling the little rood of earth, and living under the wattle roof, and being called

Baas by neighbors a little poorer or a little less poor than himself. The cathedral spire, where it rose beyond the fields in the ruddy evening skies, or in the dim, gray, misty mornings, said other things to him than this. But these he told only to Patrasche, whispering, childlike, his fancies in the dog's ear when they went together at their work through the fogs of the daybreak, or lay together at their rest amongst the rustling rushes by the water's side.

For such dreams are not easily shaped into speech to awake the slow sympathies of human auditors; and they would only have sorely perplexed and troubled the poor old man, bedridden in his corner, who, for his part, whenever he had trodden the streets of Antwerp, had thought the daub of blue and red that they called a Madonna, on the walls of the wine-shop where he drank his sou's worth of black beer, quite as good as any of the famous altar-pieces for which the stranger folk traveled far and wide into Flanders from every land on which the good sun shone.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

There was only one other beside Patrasche to whom Nello could talk at all of his daring fantasies. This other was little Alois, who lived at the old red mill on the grassy mound, and whose father, the miller, was the best-to-do husbandman in all the village. Little Alois was only a pretty baby with soft, round, rosy features, made lovely by those sweet dark eyes that the Spanish rule has left in so many a Flemish face, in testimony of the Alvan dominion, as Spanish art has left broadsown throughout the country majestic palaces and stately courts, gilded house-fronts and sculptured lintels—histories in blazonry and poems in stone.

Little Alois was often with Nello and Patrasche. They played in the fields; they

ran in the snow; they gathered the daisies and bilberries; they went up to the old gray church together, and they often sat together by the broad wood-fire in the mill-house. Little Alois, indeed, was the richest child in the hamlet. She had neither brother nor sister; her blue serge dress had never a hole in it; at kermesse she had as many gilded nuts and Agni Dei in sugar as her hands could hold; and when she went up for her first communion her flaxen curls were covered with a cap of richest Mechlin lace, which had been her mother's and her grandmother's before it came to her. Men spoke already, though she had but twelve years, of the good wife she would be for their sons to woo and win; but she herself was a little gay, simple child, in nowise conscious of her heritage, and she loved no play-fellows so well as Jehan Daas' grandson and his dog.

One day her father, Baas Cogeze, a good man, but somewhat stern, came on a pretty

group in the long meadow behind the mill, where the aftermath had that day been cut. It was his little daughter sitting amidst the hay, with the great tawny head of Patrasche on her lap, and many wreaths of poppies and blue corn-flowers round them both: on a clean, smooth slab of pine wood the boy Nello drew their likeness with a stick of charcoal.

The miller stood and looked at the portrait with tears in his eyes, it was so strangely like, and he loved his only child closely and well. Then he roughly chid the little girl for idling there whilst her mother needed her within, and sent her indoors crying and afraid: then, turning, he snatched the wood from Nello's hands. "Dost do much of such folly?" he asked, but there was a tremble in his voice.

Nello colored and hung his head. "I draw everything I see," he murmured.

The miller was silent: then he stretched his hand out with a franc in it. "It is folly

as I say, and evil waste of time; nevertheless, it is like Alois, and will please the house-mother.* Take this silver bit for it and leave it for me."

The color died out of the face of the young Ardennois: he lifted his head and put his hands behind his back. "Keep your money and the portrait both, Baas Cogez," he said simply. "You have been often good to me." Then he called Patrasche to him, and walked away across the fields.

CHAPTER IX.

AT THE OLD MILL.

“I could have seen them with that franc,” he murmured to Patrasche, “but I could not sell her picture — not even for them.”

Baas Cogez went into his mill-house sore troubled in his mind. “That lad must not be so much with Alois,” he said to his wife that night. “Trouble may come of it hereafter: he is fifteen now, and she is twelve; and the boy is comely of face and form.”

“And he is a good lad, and a loyal,” said the housewife, feasting her eyes on the piece of pine wood where it was throned above the chimney with a cuckoo clock in oak and a Calvary in wax.

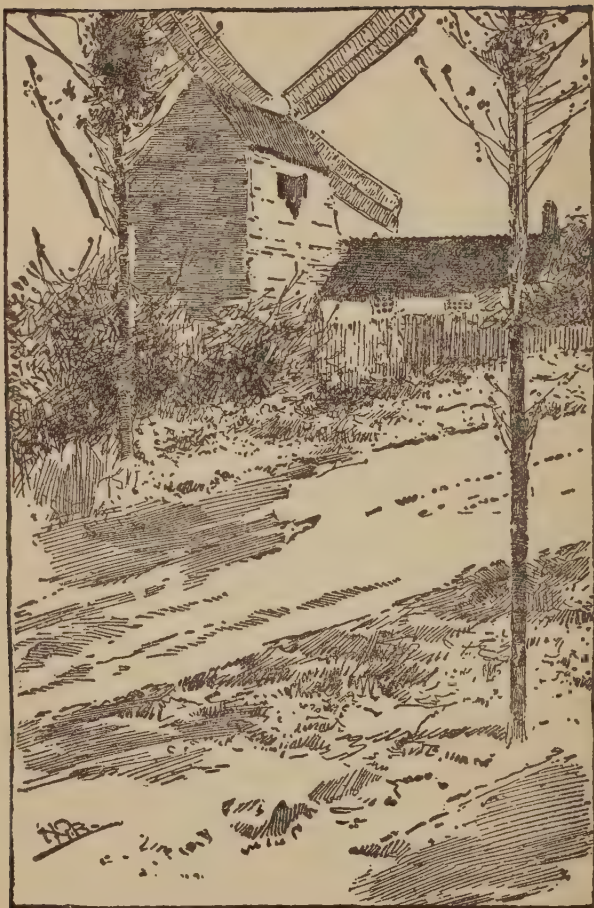
“Yea, I do not gainsay that,” said the miller, draining his pewter flagon.

“Then, if what you think of were ever to

come to pass," said the wife, hesitatingly, "would it matter so much? She will have enough for both, and one cannot be better than happy."

"You are a woman, and therefore a fool," said the miller harshly, striking his pipe on the table. "The lad is naught but a beggar, and, with these painter's fancies, worse than a beggar. Have a care that they are not together in the future, or I will send the child to the surer keeping of the nuns of the Sacred Heart."

The poor mother was terrified, and promised humbly to do his will. Not that she could bring herself altogether to separate the child from her favorite playmate, nor did the miller even desire that extreme of cruelty to a young lad who was guilty of nothing except poverty. But there were many ways in which little Alois was kept away from her chosen companion; and Nello being a boy proud and quiet and sensitive, was quickly wounded,



and ceased to turn his own steps and those of Patrasche, as he had been used to do with every moment of leisure, to the old red mill upon the slope. What his offence was he did not know: he supposed he had in some manner angered Baas Cogeze by taking the portrait of Alois in the meadow; and when the child, who loved him, would run to him and nestle her hand in his, he would smile at her very sadly, and say with a tender concern for her before himself, "Nay, Alois, do not anger your father. He thinks that I make you idle, dear, and he is not pleased that you should be with me. He is a good man, and loves you well: we will not anger him, Alois."

But it was with a sad heart that he said it, and the earth did not look so bright to him as it had used to do when he went out at sunrise under the poplars down the straight roads with Patrasche. The old red mill had been a land mark to him, and he had been used to pause by it, going and coming, for a

cheery greeting with its people, as her little flaxen head rose above the low mill-wicket, and her little rosy hands had held out a bone or a crust to Patrasche. Now the dog looked wistfully at a closed door, and the boy went on without pausing, with a pang at his heart, and the child sat within, with tears dropping slowly on the knitting to which she was set, on her little stool by the stove; and Baas Cogeze, working among his sacks and his mill-gear, would harden his will and say to himself, "It is best so. The lad is all but a beggar, and full of idle, dreaming fooleries. Who knows what mischief might not come of it in the future? So he was wise in his generation, and would not have the door unbarred, except upon rare and formal occasions, which seemed to have neither warmth nor mirth in them to the two children, who had been accustomed so long to a daily gleeful, careless, happy interchange of greeting, speech, and pastime, with no other watcher of their sports or auditor

of their fancies than Patrasche, sagely shaking the brazen bells of his collar, and responding with all a dog's swift sympathies to their every change of mood.

All this while the little panel of pine wood remained over the chimney in the mill-kitchen, with the cuckoo clock and the waxen Calvary; and sometimes it seemed to Nello a little hard that whilst his gift was accepted he himself should be denied.



CHAPTER X.

A LOYAL LAD.

But he did not complain: it was his habit to be quiet: old Jehan Daas had said ever to him, "We are poor: we must take what God sends — the ill with the good: the poor cannot choose."

To which the boy had always listened in silence, being reverent of his old grandfather; but nevertheless a certain vague, sweet hope, such as beguiles the children of genius, had whispered in his heart, "Yet the poor do choose sometimes — choose to be great, so that men cannot say them nay." And he thought so still in his innocence; and one day, when the little Alois, finding him by chance alone amongst the corn-fields by the canal, ran to him and held him close, and sobbed piteously because the morrow would

be her saint's day, and for the first time in all her life her parents had failed to bid him to the little supper and romp in the great barns with which her feast-day was always celebrated, Nello had kissed her and murmured to her in firm faith, "It shall be different one day, Alois. One day that little bit of pine wood that your father has of mine shall be worth its weight in silver; and he will not shut the door against me then. Only love me always, dear little Alois, only love me always, and I will be great."

"And if I do not love you?" the pretty child asked, pouting a little through her tears, and moved by the instinctive coqueties of her sex.

Nello's eyes left her face and wandered to the distance, where in the red and gold of the Flemish night the cathedral spire rose. There was a smile on his face so sweet and yet so sad that little Alois was awed by it. "I will be great still," he said under his breath — "great still, or die, Alois."



“You do not love me,” said the little spoilt child, pushing him away; but the boy shook his head and smiled, and went on his way through the tall yellow corn, seeing as in a vision some day in a fair future when he should come into that old familiar land and ask Alois of her people, and be not refused or denied, but received in honor, whilst the village folk should throng to look upon him and say in one another’s ears, “Dost see him? He is a king among men, for he is a great artist, and the world speaks his name; and yet he was only our poor little Nello, who was a beggar, as one may say, and only got his bread by the help of his dog.” And he thought how he would fold his grandsire in furs and purples, and portray him as the old man is portrayed in the Family in the chapel of St. Jacques; and of how he would hang the throat of Patrasche with a collar of gold, and place him on his right hand, and say to the people, “This was once my only friend;”

and of how he would build himself a great white marble palace, and make to himself luxuriant gardens of pleasure on the slope looking outward to where the cathedral spire rose, and not dwell in it himself, but summon to it, as to a home, all men young and poor and friendless, but of the will to do mighty things; and of how he would say to them always, if they sought to bless his name, "Nay, do not thank me — thank Rubens. Without him, what should I have been?" And these dreams, beautiful, impossible, innocent, free of all selfishness, full of heroical worship, were so closely about him as he went that he was happy — happy even on this sad anniversary of Alois' saint's day, when he and Patrasche went home by themselves to the little dark hut and the meal of black bread, whilst in the mill-house all the children of the village sang and laughed, and ate the big round cakes of Dijon, and the almond gingerbread of Brabant, and danced in the

great barn to the light of the stars and the music of flute and fiddle.

"Never mind, Patrasche," he said, with his arms round the dog's neck as they both sat in the door of the hut, where the sounds of the mirth at the mill came down to them on the night air — "never mind. It shall all be changed by and by."

He believed in the future: Patrasche, of more experience and of more philosophy, thought that the loss of the mill supper in the present was ill compensated by dreams of milk and honey in some vague hereafter. And Patrasche growled whenever he passed by Baas Cogez.

"This is Alois' name-day, is it not?" said the old man Daas that night from the corner where he was stretched upon his bed of sacking.

The boy gave a gesture of assent: he wished that the old man's memory had erred a little, instead of keeping such sure account.

“And why not there?” his grandfather pursued. “Thou hast never missed a year before, Nello.”

“Thou art too sick to leave,” murmured the lad, bending his handsome young head over the bed.

“Tut! tut! Mother Nulette would have come and sat with me, as she does scores of times. What is the cause, Nello?” the old man persisted. “Thou surely hast not had ill words with the little one?”

“Nay, grandfather — never,” said the boy quickly, with a hot color in his bent face. “Simply and truly, Baas Cogez did not have me asked this year. He has taken some whim against me.”

“But thou hast done nothing wrong?”

“That I know — nothing. I took the portrait of Alois on a piece of pine: that is all.”

“Ah!” The old man was silent: the truth suggested itself to him with the boy’s innocent answer. He was tied to a bed of dried

leaves in the corner of a wattle hut, but he had not wholly forgotten what the ways of the world were like.

He drew Nello's fair head fondly to his breast with a tenderer gesture. "Thou art very poor, my child," he said with a quiver the more in his aged, trembling voice, "so poor! It is very hard for thee."

"Nay, I am rich," murmured Nello; and in his innocence he thought so — rich with the imperishable powers that are mightier than the might of kings. And he went and stood by the door of the hut in the quiet autumn night, and watched the stars troop by and the tall poplars bend and shiver in the wind. All the casements of the mill-house were lighted, and every now and then the notes of the flute came to him. The tears fell down his cheeks, for he was but a child; yet he smiled, for he said to himself, "In the future!" He stayed there until all was quite still and dark, then he and Patrasche went within and slept together, long and deeply, side by side.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG ARTIST.

Now, he had a secret which only Patrasche knew. There was a little out-house to the hut, which no one entered but himself — a dreary place, but with abundant clear light from the north. Here he had fashioned himself rudely an easel in rough lumber, and here, on a great gray sea of stretched paper, he had given shape to one of the innumerable fancies which possessed his brain. No one had ever taught him anything; colors he had no means to buy: he had gone without bread many a time to procure even the few rude vehicles that he had here; and it was only in black or white that he could fashion the things he saw. This great figure which he had drawn here in chalk was only an old man sitting on a fallen tree — only that. He had



seen old Michel the woodman sitting so at evening many a time. He had never had a soul to tell him of outline or perspective, of anatomy or of shadow, and yet he had given all the weary, worn-out age, all the sad, quiet patience, all the rugged careworn pathos of his original, and given them so that the old, lonely figure was a poem, sitting there, meditative and alone, on the dead tree, with the darkness of the descending night behind him.

It was rude, of course, in a way, and had many faults, no doubt; and yet it was real, true in Nature, true in Art, and very mournful' and in a manner beautiful.

Patrasche had lain quiet countless hours watching its gradual creation after the labor of each day was done; and he knew that Nello had a hope — vain and wild, perhaps, but strongly cherished — of sending this great drawing to compete for a prize of two hundred francs a year, which it was announced in Antwerp would be open to every lad of

talent, scholar or peasant, under eighteen, who would attempt to win it with some unaided work of chalk or pencil. Three of the foremost artists in the town of Rubens were to be the judges and elect the victor according to his merits.

All the spring and summer and autumn Nello had been at work upon this treasure, which, if triumphant, would build him his first step toward independence and the mysteries of the art which he blindly, ignorantly, and yet passionately adored.

He said nothing to any one: his grandfather would not have understood, and little Alois was lost to him. Only to Patrasche he told all, and whispered, "Rubens would give it me, I think, if he knew."

Patrasche thought so too, for he knew that Rubens had loved dogs, or he had never painted them with such exquisite fidelity; and men who loved dogs were, as Patrasche knew, always pitiful.

The drawings were to go in on the first day of December, and the decision to be given on the twenty-fourth, so that he who should win might rejoice with all his people at the Christmas season.

In the twilight of a bitter wintry day, and with a beating heart, now quick with hope, now faint with fear, Nello placed the great picture on his little green milk-cart, and took it, with the help of Patrasche, into the town, and there left it, as enjoined, at the doors of a public building.

“Perhaps it is worth nothing at all. How can I tell?” he thought, with the heartsickness of a great timidity. Now that he had left it there, it seemed to him so hazardous, so vain, so foolish, to dream that he, a little lad with bare feet, who barely knew his letter, could do anything at which great painters, real artists, could ever deign to look. Yet he took heart as he went by the cathedral: the lordly form of Rubens seemed to rise from

the fog and the darkness, to loom in its magnificence before him, whilst the lips, with their kindly smile, seemed to him to murmur, "Nay, have courage! It was not by a weak heart and by faint fears that I wrote my name for all time upon Antwerp."

Nello ran home through the cold night, comforted. He had done his best: the rest must be as God willed, he thought, in that innocent, unquestioning faith which had been taught him in the little gray chapel amongst the willows and the poplar-trees.

CHAPTER XII.

A DREARY OUTLOOK.

The winter was very sharp already. That night, after they reached the hut, snow fell; and fell for very many days after that, so that the paths and the divisions in the fields were all obliterated, and all the smaller streams were frozen over, and the cold was intense upon the plains. Then, indeed, it became hard work to go round for the milk while the world was all dark, and carry it through the darkness to the silent town. Hard work, especially for Patrasche, for the passage of the years, that were only bringing Nello a stronger youth, were bringing him old age, and his joints were stiff, and his bones ached often. But he would never give up his share of the labor. Nello would fain have spared him, and drawn the cart himself,

but Patrasche would not allow it. All he would ever permit or accept was the help of a thrust from behind to the truck, as it lumbered along through the ice-ruts. Patrasche had lived in harness, and he was proud of it. He suffered a great deal sometimes from frost, and the terrible roads, and the rheumatic pains of his limbs, but he only drew his breath hard and bent his stout neck, and trod onward with steady patience.

"Rest thee at home, Patrasche — it is time thou didst rest — and I can quite well push in the cart by myself," urged Nello many a morning; but Patrasche, who understood him aright, would no more have consented to stay at home than a veteran soldier to shirk when the charge was sounding; and every day he would rise and place himself in his shafts, and plod along over the snow through the fields that his four round feet had left their print upon so many, many years.

"One must never rest till one dies," thought

Patrasche; and sometimes it seemed to him that that time of rest for him was not very far off. His sight was less clear than it had been, and it gave him pain to rise after the night's sleep, though he would never lie a moment in his straw when once the bell of the chapel, tolling five, let him know that the daybreak of labor had begun.

“My poor Patrasche, we shall soon lie quiet together, you and I,” said old Jehan Daas, stretching out to stroke the head of Patrasche with the old withered hand which had always shared with him its one poor crust of bread; and the hearts of the old man and the old dog ached together with one thought — when they were gone, who would care for their darling?

One afternoon, as they came back from Antwerp over the snow, which had become hard and smooth as marble over all the Flemish plains, they found dropped in the road a pretty little puppet, a tambourine



player, all scarlet and gold, about six inches high, and, unlike greater personages when Fortune lets them drop, quite unspoiled and unhurt by its fall. It was a pretty toy. Nello tried to find its owner, and, failing, thought that it was just the thing to please Alois.

It was quite night when he passed the mill-house; he knew the little window of her room. It could be no harm, he thought, if he gave her his little piece of treasure-trove, they had been playfellows so long. There was a shed with a sloping roof beneath her casement: he climbed it, and tapped softly at the lattice: there was a little light within. The child opened it and looked out, half frightened.

Nello put the tambourine-player into her hands. "Here is a doll I found in the snow, Alois. Take it," he whispered; "take it, and God bless thee, dear!"

He slid down from the shed-roof before she had time to thank him, and ran off through the darkness.

That night there was a fire at the mill. Out-buildings and much corn were destroyed, although the mill itself and the dwelling-house were unharmed. All the village was out in terror, and engines came tearing through the snow from Antwerp. The miller was insured, and would lose nothing: nevertheless, he was in furious wrath, and declared aloud that the fire was due to no accident, but to some foul intent.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE MILLER'S ACCUSATION.

Nello, awakened from his sleep, ran to help with the rest. Baas Cogeze thrust him angrily aside. "Thou wert loitering here after dark," he said roughly. "I believe, on my soul, that thou dost know more of the fire than any one!"

Nello heard him in silence, stupefied, not supposing that any one could say such things except in jest, and not comprehending how any one could pass a jest at such a time.

Nevertheless, the miller said the brutal thing openly to many of his neighbors in the day that followed; and though no serious charge was ever preferred against the lad, it got bruited about that Nello had been seen in the mill-yard after dark on some unspoken errand, and that he bore Baas Cogeze a grudge.

for forbidding his intercourse with little Alois; and so the hamlet, which followed the sayings of its richest landowner servilely, and whose families all hoped to secure the riches of Alois in some future time for their sons, took the hint to give grave looks and cold words to old Jehan Daas' grandson. No one said anything to him openly, but all the village agreed together to humor the miller's prejudice; and at the cottages and farms where Nello and Patrasche called every morning for the milk for Antwerp, downcast glances and brief phrases replaced to them the broad smiles and cheerful greetings to which they had been always used. No one really credited the miller's absurd suspicion, nor the outrageous accusations born of them, but the people were all very poor and very ignorant, and the one rich man of the place had pronounced against him. Nello, in his innocence and his friendlessness, had no strength to stem the popular tide.

"Thou art very cruel to the lad," the miller's wife dared to say, weeping, to her lord. "Sure he is an innocent lad and a faithful, and would never dream of any such wickedness, however sore his heart might be."

But Baas Coge, being an obstinate man, having once said a thing held to it doggedly, though in his innermost soul he knew well the injustice he was committing.

Meanwhile, Nello endured the injury done against him with a certain proud patience that disdained to complain: he only gave way a little when he was quite alone with old Patrasche. Besides, he thought, "If it should win! They will be sorry then, perhaps."

Still, to a boy not quite sixteen, and who had dwelt in one little world all his short life, and in his childhood had been caressed and applauded on all sides, it was a hard trial to have the whole of that little world turn against him for naught. Especially hard in that bleak, snow-bound, famine-stricken winter-time



when the only light and warmth there could be found abode beside the village hearths and in the kindly greetings of neighbors. In the winter-time all drew nearer to each other, all to all, except to Nello and Patrasche, with whom none now would have anything to do, and who were left to fare as they might with the old paralyzed, bedridden man in the little cabin, whose fire was often low, and whose board was often without bread; for there was a buyer from Antwerp who had taken to drive his mule in of a day for the milk of the various dairies, and there were only three or four of the people who had refused his terms of purchase and remained faithful to the little green cart. So that the burden which Patrasche drew had become very light, and the centime-pieces in Nello's pouch had become, alas! very small likewise.

The dog would stop, as usual, at all the familiar gates which were now closed to him, and look up at them with wistful, mute appeal;

and it cost the neighbors a pang to shut their doors and their hearts, and let Patrasche draw his cart on again, empty. Nevertheless, they did it, for they desired to please Baas Cogeze.

Noel was close at hand.



CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF JEHAN DAAS.

The weather was very wild and cold. The snow was six feet deep, and the ice was firm enough to bear oxen and men upon it everywhere. At this season the little village was always gay and cheerful. At the poorest dwelling there were possets and cakes, joking and dancing, sugared saints, and gilded Jesus. The merry Flemish bells jingled everywhere on the horses; everywhere within doors some well-filled soup-pot sang and smoked over the stove; and everywhere over the snow without laughing maidens pattered in bright kerchiefs and stout kirtles, going to and from the mass. Only in the little hut it was very dark and very cold.

Nello and Patrasche were left utterly alone; for one night in the week before the Christmas

Day, Death entered there, and took away from life forever old Jehan Daas, who had never known of life aught save its poverty and its pains. He had long been half dead, incapable of any movement, except a feeble gesture, and powerless for anything beyond a gentle word; and yet his loss fell on them both with a great horror in it. They mourned him passionately. He had passed away from them in his sleep, and when in the gray dawn they learned their bereavement, unutterable solitude and desolation seemed to close around them. He had long been only a poor, feeble, paralyzed old man, who could not raise a hand in their defence, but he had loved them well; his smile had always welcomed their return. They mourned for him unceasingly, refusing to be comforted, as in the white winter day they followed the deal shell that held his body to the nameless grave by the little gray church. They were his only mourners, these two whom he had left friend-

less upon earth — the young boy and the old dog. “Surely he will relent now and let the poor lad come hither?” thought the miller’s wife, glancing at her husband where he smoked by the hearth.

Baas Cogeze knew her thought, but he hardened his heart, and would not unbar his door as the little humble funeral went by. “The boy is a beggar,” he said to himself: “he shall not be about Alois.”

The woman dared not say anything aloud, but when the grave was closed and the mourners had gone, she put a wreath of immortelles into Alois’ hands, and bade her go and lay it reverently on the dark, unmarked mound where the snow was displaced.

Nello and Patrasche went home with broken hearts; but even of that poor, melancholy, cheerless home they were denied the consolation. There was a month’s rent over-due for their little home, and when Nello had paid the last sad service to the dead he had not a



coin left. He went and begged grace of the owner of the hut, a cobbler who went every Sunday night to drink his pint of wine and smoke with Baas Cogez. The cobbler would grant no mercy. He was a harsh, miserly man, and loved money. He claimed in default of his rent every stick and stone, every pot and pan, in the hut, and bade Nello and Patrasche be out of it on the morrow.

Now, the cabin was lowly enough, and in some sense miserable enough, and yet their hearts clove to it with a great affection. They had been so happy there, and in the summer, with its clambering vine and its flowering beans, it was so pretty and bright in the midst of the sun-lighted fields! Their life in it had been full of labor and privation, and yet they had been so well content, so gay of heart, running together to meet the old man's never-failing smile of welcome!

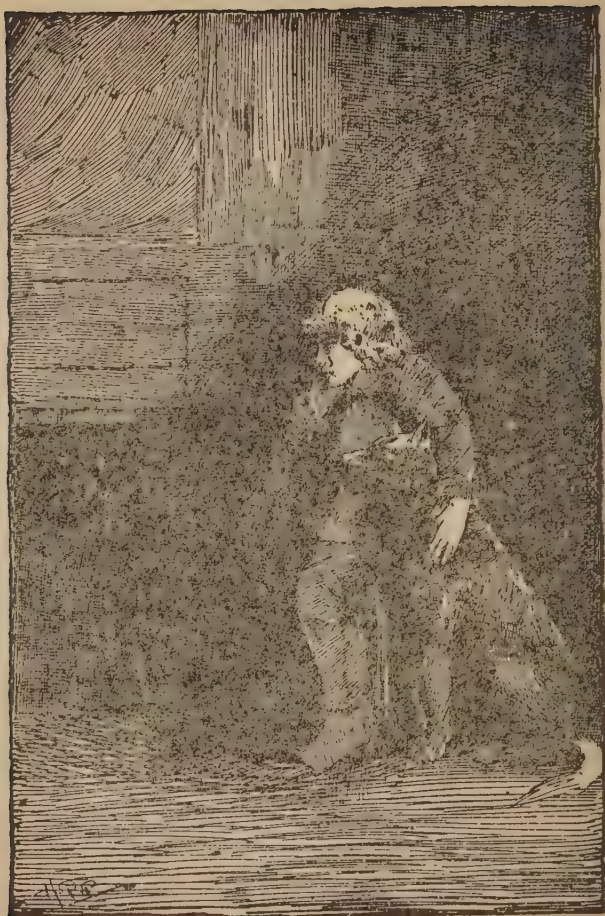
CHAPTER XV.

LEAVING THE OLD HOME.

All night long the boy and the dog sat by the fireless hearth in the darkness, drawn close together for warmth and sorrow. Their bodies were insensible to the cold, but their hearts seemed frozen in them.

When the morning broke over the white, chill earth it was the morning of Christmas Eve. With a shudder Nello clasped close to him his only friend, while his tears fell hot and fast on the dog's frank forehead. "Let us go, Patrasche — dear, dear Patrasche," he murmured. "We will not wait to be kicked out: let us go."

Patrasche had no will but his, and they went sadly, side by side, out from the little place which was so dear to them both, and in which every humble, homely thing was



to them precious and beloved. Patrasche drooped his head wearily as he passed by his own green cart: it was no longer his — it had to go with the rest to pay the rent, and his brass harness lay idle and glittering on the snow. The dog could have lain down beside it and died for very heart sickness as he went; but whilst the lad lived and needed him Patrasche would not yield and give way.

They took the old accustomed road into Antwerp. The day had yet scarce more than dawned; most of the shutters were still closed, but some of the villagers were about. They took no notice whilst the dog and the boy passed by them. At one door Nello paused and looked wistfully within: his grandfather had done many a kindly turn in neighbor's service to the people who dwelt there.

"Would you give Patrasche a crust?" he said timidly. "He is old, and he has had nothing since last forenoon."

The woman shut the door hastily, murmuring some vague saying about wheat and rye being very dear that season. The boy and the dog went on again wearily: they asked no more.

By slow and painful ways they reached Antwerp as the chimes tolled ten.

"If I had anything about me I could sell to get him bread!" thought Nello; but he had nothing except the wisp of linen and serge that covered him, and his pair of wooden shoes.

Patrasche understood, and nestled his nose into the lad's hand, as though to pray him not to be disquieted for any woe or want of his.

The winner of the drawing-prize was to be proclaimed at noon, and to the public building where he had left his treasure Nello made his way. On the steps and in the entrance-hall there was a crowd of youths — some of his age, some older, all with parents or relatives

or friends. His heart was sick with fear as he went amongst them, holding Patrasche close to him. The great bells of the city clashed out the hour of noon with brazen clamor. The doors of the inner hall were opened; the eager, panting throng rushed in: it was known that the selected picture would be raised above the rest upon a wooden dais.

A mist obscured Nello's sight, his head swam, his limbs almost failed him. When his vision cleared he saw the drawing raised on high: it was not his own! A slow, sonorous voice was proclaiming aloud that victory had been adjudged to Stephan Kiessler, born in the burgh of Antwerp, son of a wharfinger in that town.

When Nello recovered his consciousness he was lying on the stones without, and Patrasche was trying with every art he knew to call him back to life. In the distance a throng of the youths of Antwerp were shouting around their successful comrade, and escorting him

with acclamations to his home upon the quay.

The boy staggered to his feet and drew the dog to his embrace. "It is all over, dear Patrasche," he murmured, "all over!"

He rallied himself as best he could, for he was weak from fasting, and retraced his steps to the village. Patrasche paced by his side with his head drooping and his old limbs feeble from hunger and sorrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

PATRASCHE'S DISCOVERY.

The snow was falling fast; a keen hurricane blew from the north; it was bitter as death on the plains. It took them long to traverse the familiar path, and the bells were sounding four of the clock as they approached the hamlet. Suddenly Patrasche paused, arrested by a scent in the snow, scratched, whined, and drew out with his white teeth a small case of brown leather. He held it up to Nello in the darkness. Where they were there stood a little Calvary, and a lamp burned dully under the cross: the boy mechanically turned the case to the light: on it was the name of Baas Cogez, and within it were notes for two thousand francs.

The sight roused the lad a little from his stupor. He thrust it in his shirt, and stroked

Patrasche and drew him onward. The dog looked up wistfully in his face.

Nello made straight for the mill-house, and went to the house-door and struck on its panels. The miller's wife opened it, weeping, with little Alois clinging close to her skirts. "Is it thee, thou poor lad?" she said kindly through her tears. "Get thee gone ere the Baas see thee. We are in sore trouble to-night. He is out seeking for a power of money that he has let fall riding homeward, and in this snow he never will find it; and God knows it will go nigh to ruin us. It is Heaven's own judgment for the things we have done to thee."

Nello put the note-case in her hand and called Patrasche within the house. "Patrasche found the money to-night," he said quickly. "Tell Baas Cogeze so: I think he will not deny the dog shelter and food in his old age. Keep him from pursuing me, and I pray of you to be good to him."

Ere either woman or dog knew what he meant he had stooped and kissed Patrasche, then closed the door hurriedly, and disappeared in the gloom of the fast-falling night.

The woman and the child stood speechless with joy and fear: Patrasche vainly spent the fury of his anguish against the iron-bound oak of the barred house-door. They did not dare unbar the door and let him forth: they tried all they could to solace him. They brought him sweet cakes and juicy meats; they tempted him with the best they had; they tried to lure him to abide by the warmth of the hearth; but it was of no avail. Patrasche refused to be comforted or to stir from the barred portal.

It was six o'clock when from an opposite entrance the miller at last came, jaded and broken, into his wife's presence. "It is lost forever," he said with an ashen cheek and a quiver in his stern voice. "We have looked with lanterns everywhere: it is gone — the little maiden's portion and all!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD MAN RELENTS.

His wife put the money into his hand, and told him how it had come to her. The strong man sank trembling into a seat and covered his face, ashamed and almost afraid. "I have been cruel to the lad," he muttered at length; "I deserved not to have good at his hands."

Little Alois, taking courage, crept close to her father and nestled against him her fair curly head. "Nello may come here again, father?" she whispered. "He may come to-morrow as he used to do?"

The miller pressed her in his arms; his hard, sun-burned face was very pale, and his mouth trembled. "Surely, surely," he answered his child. "He shall bide here on Christmas Day, and any other day he will. God helping me, I will make amends to the boy — I will make amends."

Little Alois kissed him in gratitude and joy, then slid from his knees and ran to where the dog kept watch by the door. "And to-night I may feast Patrasche?" she cried in a child's thoughtless glee.

Her father bent his head gravely. "Ay, ay: let the dog have the best;" for the stern old man was moved and shaken to his heart's depths.

It was Christmas Eve, and the mill-house was filled with oak logs and squares of turf, with cream and honey, with meat and bread, and the rafters were hung with wreaths of evergreen, and the Calvary and cuckoo clock looked out from a mass of holly. There were little paper lanterns, too, for Alois, and toys of various fashions, and sweetmeats in bright-pictured papers. There were light and warmth and abundance everywhere, and the child would fain have made the dog a guest honored and feasted.

But Patrasche would neither lie in the

warmth nor share in the cheer. Famished he was, and very cold, but without Nello he would partake neither of comfort nor food. Against all temptation he was proof, and close against the door he leaned always, watching only for a means of escape.

"He wants the lad," said Baas Coge. "Good dog! good dog! I will go over to the lad the first thing at day-dawn." For no one but Patrasche knew that Nello had left the hut, and no one but Patrasche divined that Nello had gone to face starvation and misery alone.

The mill-kitchen was very warm; great logs crackled and flamed on the hearth; neighbors came in for a glass of wine and a slice of the fat goose baking for supper. Alois, gleeful, and sure of her playmate back on the morrow, bounded and sang and tossed back her yellow hair. Baas Coge, in the fulness of his heart, smiled on her through moistened eyes, and spoke of the way in which he would befriend

her favorite companion; the house-mother sat with calm, contented face at the spinning-wheel; the cuckoo in the clock chirped mirthful hours. Amidst it all Patrasche was bidden with a thousand words of welcome to tarry there a cherished guest. But neither peace nor plenty could allure him where Nello was not.

When the supper smoked on the board, and the voices were loudest and gladdest, and the Christ-child brought choicest gifts to Alois, Patrasche, watching always an occasion, glided out when the door was unlatched by a careless new-comer, and as swiftly as his weak and tired limbs would bear him sped over the snow in the bitter black night. He had only one thought — to follow Nello. A human friend might have paused for the pleasant meal, the cheery warmth, the cosey slumber; but that was not the friendship of Patrasche. He remembered a bygone time, when an old man and a little child had found him sick unto death in the wayside ditch.



CHAPTER XVIII.

SEEKING HIS LOST FRIEND.

Snow had fallen freshly all the evening long; it was now nearly ten; the trail of the boy's footsteps was almost obliterated. It took Patrasche long to discover any scent. When at last he found it, it was lost again quickly, and lost and recovered, and again lost and again recovered a hundred times or more.

The night was very wild. The lamp under the wayside crosses were blown out; the roads were sheets of ice; the impenetrable darkness hid every trace of habitations; there was no living thing abroad. All the cattle were housed, and in all the huts and homesteads men and women rejoiced and feasted. There was only Patrasche out in the cruel cold — old and famished and full of pain, but with the strength and the patience of a great love to sustain him in his search.

The trail of Nello's steps, faint and obscure as it was under the new snow, went straightly along the accustomed tracks into Antwerp. It was past midnight when Patrasche traced it over the boundaries of the town and into the narrow, tortuous, gloomy streets. It was all quite dark in the town, save where some light gleamed ruddily through the crevices of house-shutters, or some group went homeward with lanterns, chanting drinking-songs. The streets were all white with ice; the high walls and roofs loomed black against them. There was scarce a sound save the riot of the winds down the passages as they tossed the creaking signs and shook the tall lamp-irons.

So many passers-by had trodden through and through the snow, so many diverse paths had crossed and recrossed each other, that the dog had a hard task to retain any hold on the track he followed. But he kept on his way, though the cold pierced him to the bone, and the hunger in his body gnawed like a

rat's teeth. He kept on his way, a poor, gaunt, shivering thing, and by long patience traced the steps he loved into the very heart of the burgh, and up to the steps of the great cathedral.

"He is gone to the things that he loved," thought Patrasche: he could not understand, but he was full of sorrow and of pity for the art-passion that to him was so incomprehensible and yet so sacred.



CHAPTER XIX.

FOUND AT LAST.

The portals of the cathedral were unclosed after the midnight mass. Some heedlessness in the custodians, too eager to go home and feast or sleep, or too drowsy to know whether they turned the keys aright, had left one of the doors unlocked. By that accident the footfalls Patrasche sought had passed through into the building, leaving the white marks of snow upon the dark stone floor. By that slender white thread, frozen as it fell, he was guided through the intense silence, through the immensity of the vaulted space — guided straight to the gates of the chancel; and, stretched there upon the stones, he found Nello. He crept up and touched the face of the boy. "Didst thou dream that I should be faithless and forsake thee? I — a dog?" said that mute caress.

The lad raised himself with a low cry, and clasped him close. "Let us lie down and die together," he murmured. "Men have no need of us, and we are all alone."

In answer, Patrasche crept closer yet, and laid his head upon the young boy's breast. The great tears stood in his brown, sad eyes not for himself — for himself he was happy.

They lay close together in the piercing cold. The blasts that blew over the Flemish dikes from the northern seas were like waves of ice, which froze every living thing they touched. The interior of the immense vault of stone in which they were was even more bitterly chill than the snow-covered plains without. Now and then a bat moved in the shadows; now and then a gleam of light came on the ranks of carven figures. Under the Rubens they lay together quite still, and soothed almost into a dreaming slumber by the numbing narcotic of the cold. Together they dreamed of the old glad days when they had chased



each other through the flowering grasses of the summer meadows, or sat hidden in the tall bulrushes by the water's side, watching the boats go seaward in the sun.

Suddenly through the darkness a great white radiance streamed through the vastness of the aisles; the moon, that was at her height, had broken through the clouds; the snow had ceased to fall; the light reflected from the snow without was clear as the lights of dawn. It fell through the arches full upon the two pictures above, from which the boy on his entrance had flung back the veil: the Elevation and the Descent from the Cross were for one instant visible.

Nello rose to his feet and stretched his arms to them; the tears of a passionate ecstasy glistened on the paleness of his face. "I have seen them at last!" he cried aloud. "O God, it is enough!"

His limbs failed under him, and he sank upon his knees, still gazing upward at the

majesty that he adored. For a few brief moments the light illumined the divine visions that had been denied to him so long — light clear and sweet and strong as though it streamed from the throne of Heaven. Then suddenly it passed away: once more a great darkness covered the face of Christ.

The arms of the boy drew close again the body of the dog. "We shall see His face — *there*," he murmured; "and He will not part us, I think."

CHAPTER XX.

UNITED IN DEATH.

On the morrow, by the chancel of the cathedral, the people of Antwerp found them both. They were both dead: the cold of the night had frozen into stillness alike the young life and the old. When the Christmas morning broke and the priests came to the temple, they saw them lying thus on the stones together. Above, the veils were drawn back from the great visions of Rubens, and the fresh rays of the sunrise touched the thorn-crowned head of the Christ.

As the day grew on there came an old, hard-featured man who wept as women weep. "I was cruel to the lad," he muttered, "and now I would have made amends — yea, to the half of my substance — and he should have been to me as a son."

There came also, as the day grew apace, a painter who had fame in the world, and who was liberal of hand and of spirit. "I seek one who should have had the prize yesterday had worth won," he said to the people; "a boy of rare promise and genius. An old wood-cutter on a fallen tree at eventide — that was all his theme; but there was greatness for the future in it. I would fain find him, and take him with me and teach him Art."

And a little child with curling fair hair, sobbing bitterly as she clung to her father's arm, cried aloud, "O Nello, come! We have all ready for thee. The Christ-child's hands are full of gifts, and the old piper will play for us; and the mother says thou shalt stay by the hearth and burn nuts with us all the Noel week long — yes, even to the Feast of the Kings! And Patrasche will be so happy! O Nello, wake and come!"

But the young pale face, turned upward to

the light of the great Rubens with a smile upon its mouth, answered them all, "It is too late."

For the sweet, sonorous bells went ringing through the frost, and the sunlight shone upon the plains of snow, and the populace trooped gay and glad through the streets, but Nello and Patrasche no more asked charity at their hands. All they needed now Antwerp gave unbidden.

Death had been more pitiful to them than longer life would have been. It had taken the one in the loyalty of love, and the other in the innocence of faith, from a world which for love has no recompense and for faith no fulfilment.

All their lives they had been together, and in their deaths they were not divided; for when they were found the arms of the boy were folded too closely around the dog to be severed without violence, and the people of

their little village, contrite and ashamed, implored a special grace for them, and, making them one grave, laid them to rest there side by side — forever!



PO-NO-KAH.

AN INDIAN STORY OF LONG AGO.

I

THE HEDDEN FAMILY.

WE who live in comfortable country homes, secure from every invader, find it difficult to conceive the trials that beset the hardy pioneers who settled our Western country during the last century.

In those days, and for many a year afterward, hostile Indians swarmed in every direction, wherever the white man had made a clearing, or started a home for himself in the wilderness. Sometimes the pioneer would be unmolested, but oftener his days were full of anxiety and danger. Indeed, history tells of many a time when the settler, after leaving home in the morning in search of game for his happy household would return at night to find his family murdered or carried away and his

cabin a mass of smoking ruins. Only in the comparatively crowded settlements, where strength was in numbers, could the white inhabitants hope for security—though bought at the price of constant vigilance and precaution.

In one of these settlements, where a few neatly whitewashed cabins, and rougher log huts, clustered on the banks of a bend in the Ohio River, dwelt a man named Hedden, with his wife and three children. His farm stretched further into the wilderness than his neighbors', for his had been one of the first cabins built there, and his axe, ringing merrily through the long days, had hewn down an opening in the forest, afterward famous in that locality as "Neighbor Hedden's Clearing." Here he had planted and gathered his crops year after year, and in spite of annoyances from the Indians, who robbed his fields, and from bears, who sometimes visited his farm stock, his family had lived in security so long that, as the settlement grew, his wife sang at her work, and his little ones shouted at their play as merrily as though New York or Boston were within a stone's throw. To be sure, the children were bidden never to stray far from home, especially at nightfall; and the crack of rifles ringing now and then through the forest paled their cheeks

for an instant, as the thought of some shaggy bear, furious in his death agony, crossed their minds.

Sometimes, too, the children would whisper together of the fate of poor Annie Green, who, a few years before had been found killed in the forest ; or their mother would tell them with pale lips of the night when their father and neighbor Freeman encountered two painted Indians near the cabin. The tomahawk of the Indian who tried to kill their father was still hanging upon the cabin wall.

But all this had happened twelve years earlier—before Bessie, the oldest girl, was born—and seemed to the children's minds like a bit of ancient history—almost as far off as the exploits of Hannibal or Julius Cæsar appear to us. So, as I have said, the girls and boys of the settlement shouted joyously at their play, or ran in merry groups to the rough log hut, called "The School-House," little dreaming of the cares and anxieties of their elders.

Bessie Hedden was a merry-hearted creature, and so pretty that, had she been an Indian maiden, she would have been known as "Wild Rose," or "Singing Bird," or "Water Lily," or some such name. As it was, many of the villagers called her "Little Sunshine," for her joyous

spirit could light up the darkest corner. She was faithful at school, affectionate and industrious at home, and joyous and honorable among her playmates. What wonder, then, that everybody loved her, or that she was happiest among the happy? Her brother Rudolph was much younger than she,—a rosy-cheeked, strong-armed little urchin of seven years; and Kitty, the youngest of the Hedden children, was but three years of age at the date at which my story opens.

There was one other individual belonging to the family circle, larger even than Bessie, stronger and saucier even than Rudolph, and but little older than Kitty. He had no hands, yet once did, as all admitted, the best day's work ever performed by any member of the family. This individual's name was Bouncer, and he had a way of walking about on all-fours, and barking—probably in consequence of his having been created a dog.

Bouncer loved all the children dearly; but, stout-hearted fellow that he was, he loved the weakest one best; and, therefore, little Kitty was never without a friend and protector. Ever since a certain day in the summer, when she had fallen into the stream, and had been carried home insensible by Bouncer, Kitty had loved the huge

mastiff dearly, and nightly added to her simple prayer, "Please, God, bless dear Bouncer, too!"

And Bouncer *was* blessed beyond most dogs. Gentle as a baby when Kitty's arm was about his neck, he was fierce as a lion when fierceness was required. His great white teeth were a terror to evil-doers, and his bark in the dead of night would make venturesome bears sneak back into the forest like kittens.

Often would Mrs. Hedden say to her neighbors, that with "husband's rifle and Bouncer's teeth, she felt that she lived in a fortress. As for the children," she would add, laughingly, "I scarcely ever feel any anxiety about them, when I know that Bouncer has joined their little expeditions. He is a regiment in himself.

II

EXPLORING THE STREAM.

ONE of the favorite holiday resorts of Bessie and Rudolph was a lovely spot in the forest, not a quarter of a mile from the house. Shaded by giant oaks, whose gnarled roots lay like serpents, half hidden in the moss, ran a streamlet, covered with sunny speckles, where parted leaves ad-

mitted the sunshine. Flowers grew along its banks in wild profusion, and it held its wayward course with many a rippling fall and fantastic turn, until it was lost in the shades of the forest.

"Where does it go to, I wonder?" the children often would say to each other, longing for permission to follow its windings farther than the limits prescribed by their parents would allow.

"To the ocean, of course," Rudolph would answer, triumphantly; while Bessie, looking at its golden ripple, and listening to its musical song, half believed that it carried its wealth of sparkling jewels to Fairyland itself.

Sometimes, when Bouncer was with them, they lingered so long by the mysterious streamlet, sending chip boats adrift upon its surface, or trying to adjust troublesome little water-wheels under some of its tiny cascades, that Mrs. Hedden would blow the big horn as a signal for their return; and as they ran home, playing with Bouncer by the way, or scolding him for shaking his wet sides under their very faces, they would inwardly resolve to coax father to take them up the stream on the very first pleasant Saturday.

Accordingly, on one bright Friday in June, as Bessie and Rudolph were returning from school

together, they ran toward their father, who was working in the clearing.

"Father! father!" they shouted, "will you take us down the stream to-morrow?—we want to see where it goes to."

"Goes to?" laughed back the father. "Why, it goes to the moon; didn't Kitty say so last night?"

"Now, father," returned Bessie, pouting just a little, "you *know* we don't believe that. We want you so much to take us in the boat; it doesn't leak at all now—oh! do." And both children fairly capered in their excitement.

Mr. Hedden smiled; but, after wiping his forehead with a red and yellow handkerchief, went on thoughtfully with his work without returning any answer.

The children, looking wistfully at him a moment, turned toward the house, wondering among themselves, "what father meant to do about it."

That evening, at the supper-table (where they didn't have napkin rings or silver salt-cellars, I can assure you), Mr. Hedden asked his wife whether Tom Hennessy was back from "up river" yet?

"I think he came home yesterday," returned his wife. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I thought, as to-morrow'll be a holiday, I'd get him to take the youngsters down the stream in the scow."

"Oh! husband," rejoined Mrs. Hedden, looking up anxiously, "do you think it's safe?"

"Why not, Betsey?—the scow doesn't leak; and even if it did, the water isn't above Tom's waist anywhere."

"I don't mean anything of that kind," pursued the wife, smiling in spite of herself at the joyful faces of the young folks. "I—I mean the Indians."

"Oh, never fear about them; I'll give Tom every necessary caution," was the answer. "The boat won't be gone more than two hours altogether; and, to my mind, there wouldn't be the slightest danger in letting even little Kitty join the party."

"Oh! tanky, Poppy, tanky!" shouted Kitty, clapping her chubby hands in great glee. Every one at the table laughed heartily at her unexpected response.

Bright and early the next morning, the children stood in the door-way, eagerly looking out for Tom. Big Tom, the village boys called him; and well they might, for he was a staunch, burly fellow, who looked as if he could crush an Indian in each hand—not that

he had ever had an opportunity to perform that remarkable feat, for Tom Hennessy had but recently arrived from a large town in the East ; but he *looked* as if he could do it ; and, therefore, had credit for any amount of prowess and strength.

After sundry directions given by Mr. Heden to Tom, and a command from their mother for the little folks to be home at dinner-time, they set forth amid shouts of laughter and merriment. Kitty was there in all her glory, for, after what "Poppy" had said, she had insisted upon joining the party. Even Bouncer, in spite of many a "Go back, sir!" "Call him, mother!" had quietly insinuated himself into the group, and neither threats nor coaxing could force him away.

It was a glorious day ; and, as they neared the stream, it seemed to sparkle into joyous welcome at their approach.

Soon, comfortably seated in the scow, they were pushed and rowed laboriously along by the good-natured Tom, while Bouncer panted along the bank, or dashed into the water, splashing the boat in fine style. In passing the accustomed "limits," the delight of the children knew no bounds.

"Now for it!" cried Bessie, clapping her

hands. "Now we shall find out where **the** stream goes to!"

And so they sailed along, following its graceful windings—sometimes touching bottom, and sometimes skimming smoothly over deep water, where Kitty could no longer clutch for the tall, bright grass that here and there had reared itself above the surface. Often Big Tom would sing out, "Lie low!" as some great bough, hanging over the stream, seemed stretching out its arms to catch them; and often they were nearly checked in their course by a fallen trunk, or the shallowness of the water. At last, upon reaching a very troublesome spot, Tom cried good-naturedly—

"Now, youngsters, you must all get out while I turn the scow over this 'ere log, and then you can jump in again on t'other side."

With merry shouts they leaped out, one after the other, Tom holding Kitty in his arms, as he stood knee-deep in the water.

"What is the matter with Bouncer?" cried Bessie.

There was no time for a reply. Looking up, the frightened party saw three hideous faces peering at them over the bushes!

"The Indians! the Indians!" screamed Bessie.

Springing to the shore, and catching Rudolph with one arm, while he held Kitty tightly in the other, Tom Hennessy dashed into the forest, calling upon Bessie to follow. Poor Bessie! What could she do? With a thrill of horror she saw two fierce savages bounding after them with fearful yells, while a third, with upraised club, and tomahawk and scalping knife in his belt, was rushing toward her.

Uttering one long piercing scream, the poor girl knelt to await her doom. A prolonged roar of fury caused her to raise her head. Bouncer, brave, noble Bouncer, and the Indian had fallen together in a deadly struggle! Now was her time! With new energy and hope she sprang to her feet, and darted through the forest, rending the air with cries for help, and unconscious of whither she was flying.

"Rudolph! Kitty!" she cried, frantically. "God in heaven help us! Oh! help us!"

III.

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

It was nearly dinner-time in the Hedden cottage. Farmer Hedden sat in the dockway, equipped in his hunting dress—for he usually

spent Saturday afternoons in the forest ; and it was only at his wife's solicitation that he had consented to wait and "take a bite of dinner" before starting. Every now and then he raised his head from the almanac, over which he was bending, to listen to the whirr of his wife's spinning-wheel, and her merry song issuing from the cottage, or to cast an impatient glance in the direction of the streamlet.

Within, all was neatness and cheerfulness ; the clean deal table was arranged with its row of yellow platters and shining pewter-mugs—even the stools were standing round it, ready for the hungry household that usually assembled at noon, eager for dinner.

"Father's" and "mother's" places were at either end of the table ; Rudolph's and Kitty's at one side (Kitty had a high chair made by "father" out of young oak branches) ; Bessie's opposite ; and, beside hers, the prettiest plate ; and the brightest mug for Big Tom—for, of course, he must be asked to stay.

Everything was ready. Far back in the open fireplace the fagots were blazing and snapping. Hanging above them, the great iron pot threw forth a circle of noisy steam around the loosely fitted lid, while the potatoes within were in a high state of commotion—little ones tumbling pell-

mell over big ones, and big ones rocking dolefully backward and forward in the boiling water as though they felt sure their end was approaching.

"Blow the horn again, John," called out Mrs. Hedden, as she cut another slice from the big brown loaf that had rapidly been growing less under her shining knife. "Ha! ha! they can't help hearing *that*," she laughed, as her husband blew a blast even louder than usual.

After waiting a moment, Mr. Hedden came in, throwing the almanac on a low wooden settee as he entered.

"No use waiting any longer, wifey—let's sit by. I don't see a sign of the youngsters; though it did seem to me I heard some of 'em screaming and laughing in the distance a bit ago. 'Twon't do, though," he continued, shaking his head; "we must make the crazy little cubs mind the horn closer. Play's play, and all well enough in its way, but you must teach children regularity from the very outset, or they'll never be good for much."

"That's true enough, John," answered his wife, as she "dished" some of the steaming potatoes—leaving a goodly number in the pot for the little folk—"that's true enough; but you know this is a day of extra frolic for the children.

They're having such fun, likely, they've no notion how the time is passing. As for the horn, who could expect mortal ears to hear *that*—with Bessie and Big Tom laughing and singing, and Rudolph screaming with fun—as I know he is; and little Kit, bless her! just frantic with delight; I think I can see them now, the merry madcaps!”

Ah! happy, unconscious mother, if you *could* have seen them—if their cries of terror could but have reached your ears!

Finally, neighbor Hedden arose, shoving back his stool on the sanded floor.

“Well, well, wifey, you're right enough, no doubt; but I tell you it isn't best to be too easy with youngsters, though ours are the best going, if I *do* say it. A good trouncing all around, when they come in, wouldn't be a bit too much for them for being so late;” and, half in fun, half in earnest, he shook his head rather fiercely at his wife, and stalked out of the cottage.

Presently she laughed outright to hear the loud, impatient tones issuing from the great tin horn. “That'll fetch them, I reckon,” said neighbor Hedden, showing a smiling face at the window.

As another hour passed away, the songs grew fewer and fainter upon the mother's lips—at

first from vexation, and, finally, from weariness and a vague feeling of anxiety.

"Bessie should know better," she thought to herself, "than to stay so long. I wish I had not let Kitty go with them."

The next moment she smiled to think how hungry the children would be when they returned, and half wished that it would not be "spoiling" them to make them a good sugar-cake for their supper.

Not until the shadows grew longer upon the edge of the forest, and threatening clouds grew thicker overhead, did her heart quail or her cheek grow white with sudden fear.

"Oh! what *can* keep them, I wonder! Why didn't I ask John to go look for them?" she asked herself over and over again. But Mrs. Hedden was not one to sit weeping with folded hands while anything remained to be done.

It was not long before their nearest neighbor, who was still at work, enjoying the coolness of the afternoon, leaned upon his spade to wonder what on earth neighbor Hedden's wife was up to now.

"Why, look there! Bob," he called out to his son, "if she ain't leaping over this way like a year-old colt!"

In the mean time, neighbor Hedden himself was having but sorry sport in the forest. He saw nothing worth even pointing his gun at, and felt altogether so ill at ease and so fidgety as he trudged along, stepping now upon the soft moss, and now upon fallen branches that crackled even under the stealthy tread of his hunting moccasins, that I doubt whether half the bears hidden in the depths of the forest were not in a livelier mood than he. Not that he had anything to make him feel especially ill-humored, unless it was the disobedience of his children in having failed to appear at dinner-time—but it seemed to him that there was something going wrong in the world, some screw loose in his affairs that, unless he turned it tight in time, would cause his happiness and the prosperity of his home to fall in ruins about him. After awhile this feeling became so strong that he seated himself upon a stone to think.

“I haven’t been as neighborly as I might have been,” he reflected: “there’s many a turn been wanting by these new-comers, the Morris, that I might have ’tended to, if I hadn’t been so wrapped up in my own affairs. Come to think, almost the only kindness I’ve done for nearly a year past was in giving a bag of

potatoes to that sick fellow, Po-no-kah, who seemed to me to be a good fellow, as Indians go. However, it ain't much kindness to give to those murderous red-skins when there's plenty of white men wanting help. Well, if I'm not agoin' to shoot anything, I guess I'd better go home."

With these last words, uttered half aloud, neighbor Hedden arose, and walked a few steps in the direction of his home. Presently he paused again, muttering to himself—

"It's blamed queer I haven't heard the youngsters coming down with the scow; I certainly should have heard them if they'd passed anywhere near—guess I'd best walk on a little way up stream."

So saying, he turned, with a new anxiety upon his countenance, and moved with rapid strides toward the rivulet, that still ran rippling on, though the bright sparkles that lit its surface at noon had vanished. Indeed, by this time the sunshine was fast vanishing, too, for heavy clouds were gathering overhead, while those in the west were gilded on their lower edge.

IV.

THE SEARCH.

NEIGHBOR HEDDEN, now intent upon his new thoughts, hurried along the bank of the stream. There were pretty tassel-flowers and Jack-in-pulpits growing there, which at any other time he might have plucked, and carried home in his cap for Kitty; but he did not heed them now. Something in the distance had caught his eye, something that, showing darkly through the trees, from a bend in the streamlet, caused his breathing to grow thicker and his stride to change into a run—*it was the empty boat!*

Hastening toward it, in the vain hope that he would find his little ones playing somewhere near the spot, he clutched his rifle more firmly, and gasped out their names one by one. Where were they?—his sunny-hearted Bessie, his manly little Rudolph, and Kitty, his bright-eyed darling? Alas! the only answer to the father's call was the angry mutter of the thunder, or the

quick lighting that flashed through the gathering gloom!

In frantic haste he searched in every direction.

"Perhaps," thought he, "they have become frightened at the sound of bears, and hidden themselves in a thicket. They may even have got tired and gone to sleep. But where is Tom Hennessy?"

Again and again he returned to the boat, as though some clue might there be found to the missing ones; but as often he turned back in despair, trusting now only to the flashes of the lightning to aid him in his search, the sharp twigs and branches tore his face and hands as, bending low, he forced himself where the tangled undergrowth stood thickest. Soon his hunting-cap was dragged from his head, as by some angry hand; he knew that it had caught upon the branches, and did not even try to find it in the darkness.

The heavy drops of rain, falling upon his bare head, cooled him with a strange feeling of relief. Next his gun, which he had leaned against a tree, while on hands and knees he had forced his way into some brush, was swallowed up in the darkness.

In vain he peered around him at every flash

that lit the forest—he could see nothing of it. Suddenly a bright gleam, shooting across his pathway, revealed something that instantly caught his eye—it was a small bit of blue ribbon, such as Bessie often wore. Bending to pick it up, he started back in horror! The light had lasted but an instant, yet it had been long enough to show him that the ribbon was stained with blood, while near it the stones and leaves shone crimson! Even the gnarled roots of a fallen tree were dabbled with a fearful stain. He could see it all distinctly. With upraised arms, he knelt and poured forth an agonized prayer—

“Great God! where are my children? Oh! have mercy! have mercy!”

Flash after flash lighted up the kneeling form. Presently loud voices resounded through the forest:

“What, ho!” “Hedden! Hedden!” “Hennessy! Tom!” “Hallo!”

Hedden stood upright. The voices were familiar. He shouted back lustily, and hurried toward the approaching lanterns. Alas! he came upon faces almost as pale and inquiring as his own—no news on either side!

His neighbors had eagerly responded to the mother's appeal, but so far had searched the

forest in vain. If Bouncer only could be found; and, for almost the first time in years, Hedden called, "Bouncer! Bouncer!" without seeing the great fellow leaping toward him. What wonder, though—even Bouncer could scarcely have recognized that voice now!

"Hark!" cried one of the neighbors.

They listened. There was certainly a panting sound from some spot not far away.

"Bouncer! Bouncer!" cried the poor father. The panting again; they lowered their lanterns. What was that lying upon the ground—lying there close by Bouncer? It was Bessie! They rushed toward her. She was lying very still; Bouncer was breathing heavily.

They raised her from the ground.

"Bessie! Bessie! my darling, speak to me!" cried the father.

Her eyes opened slowly; for an instant she did not know who held her.

"Bessie, child, it's father—speak to me!"

She looked at him an instant, then with a pitiful cry buried her face in his bosom.

Bouncer staggered forward, and now, by the light of the lanterns, they could see a broad gash upon his shoulder, and another upon his head. He looked up at Bessie with a mournful whine.

"Oh, Bouncer, dear Bouncer! can't *you* tell me where they are?" cried Bessie, turning suddenly, and gazing upon him with streaming eyes.

The brave fellow tried to wag his tail, but his strength was failing fast.

"He came to me only a little while ago," sobbed Bessie. "Oh! I was so thankful! but he came so slowly I knew he was hurt. I put out my hand and felt him all hot and wet—I can't remember anything since then. Oh! father, don't let poor Bouncer die—see! he is falling! Dear old Bouncer!" and she threw herself down beside him.

The poor fellow turned his head, and tried to lick her hand; then started up, growling with something like his old savageness, and fell over. They tried to lift him; they called his name. Even Bessie attempted to arouse him with a cheerful call. There was no movement;—Bouncer was dead!

It seemed hard to leave the body of the faithful creature lying exposed in the forest, but this was no time to bury him.

All that they could gather from Bessie's confused account of the surprise by the Indians, and her own escape, served to make the party feel that further effort was almost hopeless—

still they would not despair. It was decided that one of their number should take the rescued girl back to her mother, while the rest should proceed in their search.

The fury of the storm had passed by this time, though the rain fell in great splashing drops, and the wind muttered angrily among the trees in answer to the distant rumbling of the thunder. Drenched to her skin, and shivering with excitement, Bessie begged that she might go with her father.

"We will find them soon," she pleaded; "I'm sure we will, and then we can all go home together. It will frighten mother so dreadfully to see me coming alone, without Rudolph and Kittie, and Bouncer!"

The man whose lantern had gleamed upon her shaded the light with his great rough hand from the spot where Bouncer lay, and in a voice as tender as a woman's, urged her to go with him at once.

"Go, Bessie," said her father hurriedly, on seeing that she still resisted, "we are losing time."

This was enough. "Good-night, dear father!" she sobbed, as she was led away; "don't tell Rudolph about Bouncer until he gets home, father—it will almost break his heart."

A voice that even Bessie could scarcely recognize called back through the darkness: "Good-night, my child. Go easy, Joe, and keep a sharp look-out."

"Ay! Ay!" answered the man in a suppressed voice, as he grasped more firmly the little hand in his, and hurried on.

After a wearisome tramp, they at last reached the edge of the forest. Bessie started to see a tall, white figure rushing with outstretched arms toward them.

"It's the mother," said Joe, pityingly, raising the lantern as he spoke.

"Oh, Joe!" screamed the poor woman, "have you found them?—tell me, quick!"

"Well—no, Mrs. Hedden," he shouted in reply, "not exactly that—but we've got the gal safe an' sound—not a scratch on her."

In another moment Bessie was in her mother's arms.

"Only me, mother!" she sobbed; "only me; but father's looking for them—and, oh! mother, Bouncer is dead!"

The next day brought no better tidings. At noon the men returned from their search, jaded and dispirited. After the first explanations were over, Mr. Hedden called one of the party aside and whispered, huskily—

"Give her this, Dennis—I can't; and tell her it was the only trace we could find."

The mother's quick eye caught sight of the object before her husband had fairly drawn it from beneath his hunting-jacket. "It's Kitty's hood," she cried, stretching forth her hand as she fell senseless to the floor.

That evening, and for many a day afterward, the search was continued but without success; no trace could be found of either Tom Hennessy, Rudolph, or little Kitty.

V.

THE CAPTIVES.

AND what had befallen Tom and the children, on the fearful day of their sail up the beautiful stream? Bessie's eyes had not deceived her when, in one agonized glance, she had seen Tom dash into the forest bearing Rudolph and Kitty in his arms, followed by yelling savages. The chase, however, was a short one; before Tom had advanced many steps his pursuers closed upon him, and tearing the children from his embrace, bound his arms close to his body with deerskin thongs. The children, screaming with terror, struggled in the arms of

the Indians and called frantically upon Tom for help; but he, poor fellow, could only turn his pitying eyes upon them and beg them to remain quiet.

"It'll save you from worse things," he groaned. By this time several savages, darting from near hiding-places, and surrounded them and Tom abandoned all hope of escape. Bessie's screams had died away, and he felt sure that she had been killed by the Indian who had first rushed upon her.

After holding a moment's council the Indians began a rapid march, hurrying Tom along with them, and almost dragging the terrified children—who, each with a tiny hand in the grip of a painted warrior, ran panting by their sides. Hurrying on, faster and faster, until even Tom was nearly out of breath, the savages, without exchanging a word among themselves, continued their flight (for such it seemed), carefully avoiding even the breaking of a twig, or anything that could furnish a clue to those who might come in pursuit.

Soon Kitty, who could run no more, was snatched angrily from the ground and carried, like a bundle, under the great muscular arm of one of the savages. But when Rudolph showed evident signs of exhaustion, the Indians paused,

evidently consulting together whether they should not tomahawk the children at once. Tom could stand it no longer. He declared that he would not go another step if the children were injured a hair.

"Let me carry them," he cried. "I am strong enough to bear a dozen youngsters—unbind me, I say, and hand 'em over."

Some of the red men knew enough of English to understand his meaning. With a contemptuous sneer one of them tossed Rudolph on Tom's back; then set one of his arms free, and drove him onward with many a brutal stroke. It was hard work for Tom, shackled as he was, to bear the frightened boy, who at times clung to his throat so tightly as to almost strangle him.

"Hold on, Rudolph, boy," he whispered; "lower down—there, that way. Now don't cry; you're father's little man, you know."

"Oh, Tom," sobbed the poor boy, "they'll kill us, I'm sure, as they killed little Annie Green. See, now, how they carry Kitty—how they scrape her face against the bushes; oh! oh!" and Rudolph hid his eyes in Tom's hair, crying as if his little heart would break.

"Hush!" muttered Tom, sternly, "or I'll put you down."

In an instant one of the red men whose look, though grim and fearful enough, showed less savageness than his companions, gruffly took Kitty from the Indian who was carrying her with such cruel carelessness. The change comforted the child, and in a few moments the exhausted little creature was sleeping soundly upon his shoulder, never waking even through the thunder-storm that ere long seemed to rend the forest.

In this way the Indians hurried on, pausing once to change their captive's bands, so as to leave his right arm free instead of his left. Now and then Tom would put Rudolph upon the ground for awhile, and when the little fellow flagged he would lift him up to his shoulder again.

At nightfall the party halted and made a large fire of brush, by which they cooked some venison and hominy, which had been carried by them during the march. After partaking of their meal, and giving their prisoners a liberal supply, they disposed themselves for the night, first taking care to fasten Tom's hands and feet securely, and even to bandage the children's ankles so that they could not stand. In vain Tom peered about him for a chance of escape for himself and his charges—for he would on

no account have left them behind—but there was no hope. His knife had been taken away from him, and all night long he was watched by two Indians, who remained near him in a sitting posture. Even when their dusky faces were lost in the darkness, he could see the gleam of their piercing eyes as the fire-light flashed and faded. Once, when the pain from his fastenings became insupportable, he complained to one of the watchers and begged to be unbound for a moment, while a wild hope rushed through his heart that he might then, quick as a flash, seize Rudolph and Kitty and fly through the darkness out of the reach of his pursuers. Vain hope! no opportunity came, though the Indian readily complied with his request. Almost every warrior raised himself upon his elbow in an instant, and he felt the glare of a dozen eyes upon him at the slightest motion he made. After the Indian had loosened the fastenings somewhat, and given Tom a drink of pure spring water, he even offered him some parched corn, and in no unfriendly way motioned to him to try and sleep; but all this show of kindness did not reassure Tom. He had heard enough of Indian warfare to feel that any consideration they might show their prisoners at first was often but a proof that they

were reserving them for the greatest cruelties afterward.

Long before daylight the next morning, the march was resumed, in the same manner as on the previous day ; and, indeed, for three or four days it was continued over a country dense with cedar thicket, and becoming rougher and more rocky as they journeyed on. At last, after traveling westward for a distance of over a hundred miles—as nearly as Tom could estimate—they saw, afar, rising from the lowlands, the smoke of an Indian encampment.

Some one evidently had been on the look-out for them. Before they reached the spot, they were welcomed with loud whoops and yells. Presently the entire community, as it seemed, turned out to receive them—hundreds of savages, men, women, and children—who, when they saw the prisoners, pierced the air with wild shouts of joy.

The men were painted in every conceivable way, with hideous daubs of color upon their limbs and faces, or tattooed so as to look more fearful still ; their heads were closely shaved, leaving only a lock on the crown, called the scalp-lock, which was twisted up so as to hold tufts of brilliant feathers. The women, scarcely less hideous than the men (excepting here and

there a young maiden, the joy of her tribe, standing apart from the rest), crowded fiercely about, and the children, naked and dirty, whooped and yelled like so many imps.

The scene was certainly not likely to inspire the prisoners with any keen sense of security. Indeed, Tom expected instant death at their hands. As for Rudolph and Kitty, the poor little creatures were stupefied with terror, and clung to Tom in a way that seemed to make the Indian children half mad with delight.

Suddenly all the warriors arranged themselves into two long lines, facing each other—and, brandishing their tomahawks, switches, and clubs, called upon Tom to run the gauntlet! One of the savages proceeded to set free the limbs of the captive, at the same time explaining to him, in broken English, the nature of the ceremony about to be enacted. This was nothing less than for Tom to run between the lines, along their entire length, with the chance of receiving a blow from each Indian as he passed.

“Run like deer!” said the Indian, as he jerked off the last strip of hide from the captive’s arm, “then he get more few knock.”

Casting one despairing look about him, and seeing not a possible chance of escape, even if he were not bound to the spot by the presence

of Rudolph and Kitty, poor Tom entered upon the dread ordeal. His weariness was forgotten as, in very desperation, he flew between the lines so rapidly that for a short distance the blows fell but lightly upon him. Soon a crushing stroke from the back of a tomahawk fell heavily upon his shoulder, but he did not falter; the yells and blows of the savages lent wings to his feet—until, at last, when the end was nearly reached, a huge chief struck him a blow, with his club, that felled him to the ground. Springing up instantly, Tom dashed forward again, and staggered on to the end of the line where he sank to the ground, unable to rise. Up to the last moment he could hear the shrieks of Rudolph rising above the din. The poor child had been forced to witness Tom's suffering from the first.

As soon as Tom opened his eyes he saw the pale, tearful faces of Rudolph and Kitty. "Don't cry, youngsters," he gasped; "be good, and we may get home again yet."

"Oh, come *now*," urged Kitty; "come tell mammy—mammy'll whip 'em for hurtin' 'oo; naughty Injins!"

Rudolph, forgetting his misery for an instant, laughed outright at Kitty's words. The next instant he shook his head solemnly—at her—

"No, Kitty, mother couldn't whip 'em. But oh, I wish we were home! I wish we were home!" he cried, giving vent to his terrors again, as he saw a group of red men moving hastily towards them.

After dashing water over Tom's wounds and laying him upon a bed of deer-skins, the savages seated themselves in a ring, and held a council to decide the fate of the prisoners. The warriors sat in silence while a great war-club was passed around the circle. Those who were in favor of burning them alive struck the ground heavily with the weapon before handing it to the next warrior; while those who objected to putting them to death in that manner merely passed it on in silence.

Tom saw all this from where he lay, and he knew its meaning well. With a sinking heart he heard the heavy thump of the club as each warrior gave his cruel vote, until at last one chief, holding the club in the air, pointed with a meaning gesture—first at Tom, then at Rudolph and Kitty. The chiefs responded with a grunt of assent to his inquiry concerning the latter, but shook their heads when their attention was directed to Tom. Then the noble fellow knew that not his fate, but that of the children was being decided; while they, unconscious little

creatures, looked on half amused at what seemed to them some singular game.

"Hi!" whispered Rudolph to Kitty, "didn't that fellow hit hard, though?—he'll beat I guess."

A moment more and the council was ended. One of the Indians approached the children and daubed their faces with black; it was a fatal sign, for it proved that the vote had been against them—Rudolph and Kitty were to be put to death!

VI.

KA-TE-QUA.

ALL that night, and for many days afterward, Tom lay in a burning fever, quite unconscious of what was passing around him.

Meanwhile, strange to say, Rudolph and Kitty were treated almost with kindness. They were well fed, and were given the softest deer-skins to lie upon at night. Finding themselves unharmed as the hours went on, the little creatures became more confident, and finally resumed their natural playfulness.

Kitty was never weary of the bright beads and ornaments of the Indian maidens, and Rudolph found great delight in shooting with the

bows and arrows of the *papooses* or children, who, in turn, were wonderfully amused at the bad shots of the little pale-face. Now and then, to be sure, the vicious child of some chieftain would amuse itself by pricking Kitty's tender skin with a thorn, and hearing her scream in consequence; or, having seen the black-and-blue marks upon her delicate arms, caused by the rough handling of her captors, they would pinch her flesh and watch for the change of color with intense interest. One day they tried it while Rudolph was standing by, holding the hand of the squaw who had him in charge. No sooner did the usual scream escape Kitty's lips than, quick as thought, the boy broke from the woman's grasp, and, rushing upon his sister's tormentor, laid the little savage in the dust and pummeled him well. Instead of resenting this, the Indians seemed to admire the pluck of the young pale-face, and he rose in their favor at once. Especially did the old squaw, as Indian women are called, applaud him. She was a strange old creature, named Ka-te-quā (*female eagle*), and, being half crazy, was looked upon by the Indians as one inspired by Manitou, or the Great Spirit. Besides, her brother had been a famous Medicine-man* of the tribe; and her two sons, who had been

* Mystery-man or Indian prophet.

slain in battle, were celebrated braves or warriors, each owning long chains of scalps, which they had taken from their enemies. So, of course, when she wagged her head in approbation of Rudolph's conduct, all the women near her wagged their heads also. Indeed, had Tom remained ill a few weeks longer, the black marks on the children's faces would have worn off without any further injury being done them. But as he grew better, and, finally, was able to sit upright on his deer-skin couch, the malice of his captors was renewed. They resolved not only to carry out the sentence upon the children, but to put the sick pale-face to new tortures as soon as he was strong enough to afford them the requisite amount of sport on the occasion. Accordingly on the fourth day after Rudolph had punished the little "Red-skin," preparations were begun. Heaps of fagots were industriously piled against an oak tree, which stood apart. Tom, with feet shackled, and his arms tightly secured to his sides, was led out to witness the fearful scene. Rudolph and Kitty were seized, and, in spite of their struggles, bound side by side to the tree.

Already the wild dance of the Indians had begun. Frightful yells and whoops filled the air, and even women and little dusky children

clapped their hands and shouted with excitement and delight. They brought armfuls of brush and laid it close to the pile. Nothing was needed to complete the deed but to apply the fatal torches, now sending forth hot, fierce gleams into the pale air, and brandished by a dozen yelling savages.

At a signal from an aged chief, the brush was lighted. The fire cracked and snapped; soon its snake-like wreaths curled about the pile, sending thick smoke around the screaming victims, when, suddenly, old Ka-te-qua—she who had taken charge of the children—rushed from the neighboring forest. Tearing through the crowd, she flew to the pile of fagots, and with vigorous strokes scattered the blazing wood in every direction.

Then, turning toward the astonished savages, who had retreated a few paces to escape the burning brands, she addressed them passionately in the Indian tongue:

“The Great Spirit,” she cried, “scowls upon you—the very flames hiss in the wet grass. The sons of Ka-te-qua are gone to the happy hunting grounds of the dead. Her wigwam is dark. The young pale-faces are to her like the water-lilies of the stream. Why, when she was in the forest gathering herbs for the sick of

her tribe, did ye steal them from her lodge like dogs?

"Is the tongue of Ka-te-qua forked? Has she not said that no warrior need hunt the deer for the young pale-faces? With her they shall grow like hickory saplings, towering with strength. The deer shall not be more fleet than they, nor the songs of the birds more glad. The sun shall paint their white skins. The love of the red man shall enter their hearts: they shall be as the young of our tribe. Unbind them! Give them to Ka-te-qua, or by the next moon a burning fever shall fall upon you. Like panthers will you bite the dust. All the waters of the great cataract cannot quench your thirst, and your mightiest hunters will be as women."

She paused. A fine-looking chieftain arose and spoke:

"The sister of the great Medicine-man has spoken well. She dwells alone in her wigwam. Her arm is strong. Her eye is keen, like the hawk's. The deer fall before her, and her arrow can find the heart of the grizzly bear. Her corn stands higher than the grass of the prairie. She can feed the young pale-faces. The Great Spirit gives them to her. Let it be so."

A council was held at once. This time more

than half the chieftains passed the club on in silence, for Ka-te-qua, as I have said, was respected among them ; she had great powers of healing, and many of the Indians regarded her with a superstitious reverence.

The children were unbound and borne in state to the old squaw's wigwam. From that hour, though they were closely watched and guarded, their lives were safe.

VII.

BIG TOM

FROM the conduct of the Indians towards Tom, it was evident that his time for torture had not yet arrived. He therefore had tact enough to remain "weak" as long as possible, tottering languidly about the grounds whenever they allowed him the liberty of exercising his limbs, and drinking the mixtures and decoctions of Ka-te-qua with the patience of a martyr. In the meantime, the shrewd fellow took care to win the good-will of the tribe by taking apparent interest in their games, and showing a great amount of admiration at their feats of strength and agility. He amused them too by the display of numerous accomplish-

ments peculiar to himself, such as whistling in close imitation of the songs of various birds, and performing feats of jugglery that he had long ago learned in his native town. He could bark like a dog and howl like a wolf; imitate the distant tramping of horses' feet, and give the sound of a whizzing arrow so perfectly that the oldest chiefs would turn their head quickly in the direction of the sound. Neither at this, however, nor at any other of Tom's performances, would they show the slightest change of countenance, for an Indian never allows himself to exhibit feelings of surprise, considering it quite beneath the dignity of his race to do so. Even when, by some dexterous trick, Tom would show them two or three acorns under a leaf where their reason told them there could be none, and then as mysteriously cause the same acorns to disappear, the stony faces looking on never changed a muscle though at heart they were probably quite as astounded as the Welsh monster was supposed to be when Jack the Giant-Killer, performed such wonderful feats with hasty-pudding. By degrees, as Tom deemed it prudent to appear stronger, he would dance the sailors' hornpipe for them, or sing wild, rollicksome songs, or make beautiful rustic seats and bowers for the squaws. He was

a capital marksman, too, and soon won respect by showing that he could handle a musket with the best of them. The few Indians who owned guns had become very expert in their use; and Tom, whenever they had trials of their skill, took care to shoot just well enough to prove himself a good marksman, without provoking their anger by excelling too often,

After awhile, in his desire to win their confidence, he even went so far as to signify to the Indians that he would like to become one of them; that their mode of life suited him well, and he would be glad to hunt and fish with them and be a pale-face no more. Alas! poor fellow, he did not know what he was saying, or how soon he would find out that even in cases of great temptation no one can tell a lie without suffering unhappy consequences. The savages took him at his word. They held a council. After it was over, while most of them were still smoking their long, richly ornamented pipes with great deliberation, two or three of the Indians seized him and gravely commenced plucking out his hair by the roots.* Soon Tom twitched from head to foot, and water stood in his eyes; but the red men still kept on with

* See American Adventure by Land and Sea. Harper Bros. 1842.

their work, dipping their fingers in ashes occasionally to enable them to take a better hold. Before long his head was completely bald, with the exception of one long tuft upon his crown, called the scalp-lock. This was immediately stiffened and plaited, so as to stand upright and hold a variety of ornaments, which his glum hairdresser fastened upon it. Then two old Indians pierced his nose and ears and hung big rings in the smarting holes. They then took off his clothing and painted his body with every variety of color. Next they hung a gaily embroidered cloth about his loins, put a wampum* chain about his neck and fastened silver bands on his right arm. When this was done the whole party gave three shrill whoops, and men, women, and children crowded around him, making the most frantic gestures, and uttering the most horrid sounds that ever a poor fibbing white man heard.

Next the maidens of the tribe rushed upon him, and, hurrying him to a stream that ran near by, dragged him into the water until it reached his waist, and tried to force his head under. This of course, aroused all his spirit of

**Wampum*. Beads made of shells, used by North American Indians as money, the shells run on strings, and are wrought into belts and ornaments.

resistance; but, when one of the girls, named She-de-ah (wild sage), cried into his ear. "No kill! no kill!" he concluded to submit.

After this he was ducked and held under most unmercifully, until, believing by this time that "the white blood must be all washed out of him," they led him up the shore, all shivering and dripping, and presented him to their principal chief.

The next performance was to dress him in an Indian shirt ornamented with feathers and beads and bits of porcupine quill. They put leggins on his legs and moccasins on his feet, and, seating him upon a bear-skin, gave him flint and steel to strike a light with; then a pouch, a tomahawk, some tobacco, and a long pipe. Then the chiefs seated themselves beside him, and smoked in silence. Tom knew well enough that he was expected to smoke too, and filled and lit his pipe accordingly, never dreaming of the consequences. Old as he was, nearly twenty, this was his "first smoke," and very soon the poor fellow found himself growing deadly sick. He could feel the cold chills creeping one after another into his very face. Finally, something within him seemed to turn somersaults, when, yielding to a sudden impulse, he flung the pipe upon the ground, and rushed

into the recesses of the wigwam, where he usually slept. This the Indians, who attach an almost sacred importance to the pipe, took as a great affront ; and only when Tom afterward, by the most earnest gestures, explained to them the real cause of his conduct, did they allow their injured feelings to be pacified ; though it cut him sorely to notice the expressions of contempt, and ridicule that were soon lavished upon him. Whether this proof of what seemed in Indian opinion a want of manliness had anything to do with their conduct or not, I cannot say, but certain it is that no further ceremonies towards making him a red-man were performed though he was allowed to wear his Indian costume. Neither did they allow him to hunt with them, as he had hoped. Whenever they went forth to shoot the bison or deer, or to trap the beavers, or wage war with hostile tribes, they always left him with the squaws, the old men, and the warriors who remained at home to take charge of the settlement.

Rudolph and Kitty were sorely frightened when they first saw the strange figure, "half Indian, half Tom," as Rudolph afterward described him, stalk into Ka-te-qua's wigwam. His bald head and painted body struck poor Kitty with dismay. When he spoke sooth-

ingly to her, and gave her a handful of bright feathers, she ventured to approach him, though she cried pitifully all the time for Tom, dear, big Tom, who knew papa and mamma, and Bessie and Bouncer.

Neither Kitty nor Rudolph had forgotten the brave dog through all these days of absence, and they loved to hold long conversations with Tom about him; though the little creatures oftener talked of their parents and Bessie, as they lay at night upon their beds of dried grass.

VIII.

BOUNCER'S WORK.

TH**ERE** was another person in the settlement besides the captives, who was not likely to forget Bouncer very soon. This was an Indian who, wounded and exhausted, had reached the settlement four days after the arrival of the prisoners. He had an ugly mark upon his throat, and another on his chest, and he sulked aside from the rest of his tribe as though he felt that his wounds were ignoble, and a dishonor to his Indian birth. It was his blood that Farmer Hedden had seen on that fearful night;

and when more than once the agonized father had listened to what seemed to be the tread of some skulking wolf, he had heard this very Indian, who, half dead with pain and loss of blood, was dragging himself slowly through the depths of the forest.

This discomfited warrior had looked upon Tom and the two little pale-faces with dislike, from the hour when he first saw them as prisoners in the encampment. They were constant reminders to him of his mortifying struggle with the dog. He felt it all the more because, though his jacket and leggings were trimmed with the scalps of his enemies, he had lately been forced to receive charity from the white man's hand. This was when, starving and nearly frozen, he had fallen helpless in the forest, after an unlucky trapping excursion; a settler had found him there, given him food and drink and sent him on his way with a bountiful supply of provisions.

Big Tom saw the dark looks of this Indian, and regarded him with suspicion; but little Kitty was quite unconscious of the resentful feelings of "the sick man," as she called him. In fact, as soon as she grew more familiar with the Indians, she often sought him in preference to the rest, and loved to sit upon the ground beside

him, and trace with her tiny fingers the patterns worked upon his leggings and moccasins.

At first the grim warrior repulsed these familiarities; but when, as he began to mingle with his tribe, he heard her sweet voice calling him by name, and saw her day after day display her store of beads and feathers at his feet, his feelings gradually softened. Before long he ceased to scowl upon her when she lifted her sunny face to his, and, on rare occasions, he even allowed her to count his arrows.

Once, when Rudolph had shot a wild turkey, he rushed to Ka-te-qua's wigwam with his prize, for he had learned to love the strange old squaw, though he feared her, too, sometimes. Kitty clapped her hands with delight at her brother's skill, and begged him to go with her and show the dead bird to her favorite Indian.

"Come, Rudolph; come show 'Nokah,'" she pleaded, pulling the young hunter by the arm. "Come twick! he goin' away."

Rudolph suffered himself to be led. They found Po-no-kah standing alone by a tree, fully equipped for the hunt.

He looked at the turkey and gave a grunt, not particularly flattering to Rudolph's vanity.

"I've shot THREE!" said the boy, holding up three fingers to make his meaning clearer.

"Ugh!" grunted the savage again. "Pale face no shoot much."

"But I'm growing," persisted Rudolph. "When I'm big, I'm going to shoot bears and bison. Did you kill the bears to get all these claws?" he added, pointing up to Po-no-kah's necklace, which was formed entirely of huge bear-claws, strung through the thickest end.

"Ugh," replied the Indian, nodding his plumed head, "me shoot him."

"And these scalps," said Rudolph, shuddering as he pointed to the fringe of human hair hanging from the buckskin leggings; "did *you* get all these?"

"Ugh," he answered grimly, nodding the plumes again.

"You are bad, then," exclaimed Rudolph, looking fearlessly into Po-no-kah's eyes. "I know *you*," he added suddenly, after gazing at him intently for an instant. "Father brought you into our kitchen last winter, and I ran behind the door. Mother gave you meat and hot drink, and father warmed you and gave you a bag of potatoes. Oh!" he continued, clasping Po-no-kah's knee, "*you* know where our home is. Nearly every night I dream that mother is calling us. Show me the way, please do. Ka-te-qua says there are dreadful things in the forest

that will eat me up, but I am not afraid. Oh, do tell us the way home ! ”

The Indian gave a sharp look at the sobbing boy, and seemed in part to understand his words. Stooping, he whispered in a stern tone : “ No speak ; no tell Ka-te-quā ; ”—and without one glance of encouragement, he stalked away to the spot where the other Indians had assembled, preparing for the hunt.

The children saw him no more for weeks. Rudolph remembered his parting words, and though he could not fully understand Po-no-kah’s motive, he faithfully obeyed his command. Not even to Tom did he relate what had occurred.

IX.

INDIAN LIFE.

RUDOLPH and Kitty learned many things from the Indians that they never would have studied in the rough school-house near their pretty home ; and they soon became familiar with many singular customs that at first filled them with wonder.

For instance : when they, or any of the little papooses, were naughty or disobedient, they

were put under what might be called the water-cure treatment. Instead of being whipped or locked up in a dark pantry—as was, I am sorry to say, the custom among some white people—they were simply “ducked” under water until they became manageable. Winter or summer, it was all the same. A bad child would very soon become a wet child, if there were any water within a mile.

There are bright sides, as well as dark, to the Indian character; and in considering their cruelties and inhuman practices, we must remember that the white man has not always been just to him or set a good example to his uncivilized brother, or been careful not to provoke him to deeds of resentment and wrong. An Indian rarely forgets a kindness, and he never tells a lie. He is heroic, and deems it beneath a man’s dignity to exhibit the slightest sign of pain under any circumstances. Among the Sioux tribe of that time, the boys were trained from the first to bear as much hardship as possible. They had a ceremony called the Straw Dance, in which children were forced to maintain a stately and measured step, while bunches of loose straws tied to their naked bodies were lighted and allowed to burn slowly away. Any poor little creature who flinched

or "broke step" was sorely punished and held in disgrace.

There were certain dances among the Indians performed by the warriors, before going either to battle or to the hunt. If to battle, they spent hours, and often whole days and nights together, in the fearful war-dance, accompanied by clashing on their drumlike instruments, and whoops that rang long and loud amid the echoing hills. If to the hunt, the Bear-Dance or the Buffalo-Dance was kept up nights and days before starting, in order to propitiate the Bear Spirit or Buffalo Spirit, whichever it might be. They had a funeral dance also, which was very solemn and impressive. And if a chieftain was to be buried, either in the river, or, as among the Mandans, on a rough platform erected on poles high up from the ground, the warriors danced before his wigwam, and assigned to a few of their number the duty of seeing that his widow and children, if he left any, should never be without food and shelter.

Kitty and Rudolph often looked on with mingled feelings of terror and delight, while some of these strange ceremonies were being enacted. It was curious to see the stalwart warriors, with bent backs and glum faces, and many a grunt or whoop, stamp through the

measured dance. Often Kitty would clutch her brother's arm in terror, when, in strange concert, the savages would suddenly halt, and with fiendish look and stealthy gesture, seem to be listening to the approach of an enemy.

Sometimes, too, the women danced, but always apart from the men. Even in their games the warriors and squaws never played together. Among the Crow Indians, famous for their long black hair, it was not uncommon for a thousand young men to play in one game of ball for three or four consecutive days without interruption. As soon as one player retired, exhausted, another took his place. Often hundreds of women played together, and they were generally as expert as the men in throwing and catching the ball.

Another strange feature among Indian customs, was the importance attached to the *medicine-bag*. Every warrior had one, and would no sooner hunt, or go to battle, or appear among his tribe without it, than he would neglect to wear his bow or his scalping-knife. Not that the bag contained any medicine, such as we understand by the word—for it was nothing but a small piece of skin sewed like a bag, curiously ornamented, and stuffed with straw or leaves—but because he regarded it as a *charm*. With him, “medicine” meant some mysterious power

that would protect and guide him, and propitiate the unseen powers in his favor. When about to obtain his medicine, the young Indian went alone to some solitary river or lake in the depths of the forest, or mounted to some lonely peak. Here he fasted, and remained until, sleeping, he dreamed. The first animal he dreamed about, whether it were a bear, buffalo, deer, weasel, or bird or reptile of any kind, became his "medicine" forever. He at once hunted until he found one, and obtained its skin for a bag.

Rudolph and Kitty looked with awe upon many of the rare medicine-bags of the tribe, though they were never on any account allowed to touch them. Indeed, Kitty had managed to make a rough little one for Rudolph, dotted with clumps of beads, and he wore it next his heart with secret pride. The little fellow had once, while tramping through the forest with Katequa, seen a number of deer gathered around a spring, or salt-lick, as it is called, and had quivered with frightened delight to see the finest one fall wounded by her arrow. When the large eyes of the wounded creature had turned plaintively toward him, he had tried not to feel sorry, but his heart ached in spite of his efforts.

"I shall be a mighty hunter one of these days," he said to Kitty on his return; "but I

won't shoot deer, for they look at you just as if they wanted to speak. I'll get bears though, lots of 'em, and buffalo ; and I'll have a fine trap when I get home, and catch badgers and foxes, just as the Indians do."

Tom and Rudolph saw with indignation that, throughout the village, the labor and drudgery were forced upon the squaws, while the warriors stretched themselves lazily upon the ground, or smoked their pipes under the spreading trees. As for Kitty, she was too busy watching the women cook, dig, chop, and carry, to make any moral reflections.

She loved, also, to sit beside them when they prepared the skins brought in from the hunt, or while they were busy with their curious sewing, so different from that with which she had seen her mother occupied.

Bright-colored rags, feathers, beads, porcupine-quills, and even scraps of tin, were the ornaments upon which the squaws relied to make the toilets of their tribe "stylish" and beautiful ; and Kitty—tiny little woman that she was—soon grew to agree with them perfectly in matters of taste.

To be sure, the Indian women never did anything quite so barbarous as to put their little girls' feet into narrow shoes with high heels, nor fasten tight belts about their waists, so that

the God-given machinery within could hardly work. But they did many preposterous things, for all that. They painted their bodies and tattooed their skins, by pricking figures on the flesh and rubbing in some staining juice when the blood appeared. They even pierced their noses, so that bright rings could dangle from them. Many, too, hung bits of metal from their ears in a similar way—but that may not strike my civilized readers as being a very barbarous custom.

X.

KA-TE-QUA'S "GOOD NIGHT."

THUS weeks and months passed away, not so wearily to the prisoners, as to the poor, sorrowing hearts that mourned for them at home. Tom's brain was always busy in planning some mode of escape for himself and his little charges. But, as he was still closely guarded, never being left alone for an instant, night or day, and as the children slept in the wigwam of Ka-te-qua, whose eyes seemed never intended to close, he concluded to wait patiently rather than to risk the lives of all three by an unsuccessful attempt.

Meantime, Ka-te-qua's strong arms grew feeble, her arrow became less fatal in its aim, and her strange fits of moodiness filled Rudolph and Kitty with dread.

For hours she would sit at the entrance of her wigwam, chanting mournfully in the Indian tongue. At such times she would compel the children to remain within,—becoming frantic with crazy rage should they attempt to force past her into the pleasant sunshine; and they would sit together in the shadow, hoping that by some whim she would walk away, or that the long, long chant would cease. One afternoon she kept them waiting in this way for hours. The sun sank lower and lower into the distant prairie, and the crimson clouds faded to a dull gray. Rudolph and Kitty sat listening to the wailing tones of Ka-te-qua's voice until, as the evening grew dark and chilly, they found for themselves a scanty supper of parched corn, and after whispering their simple prayer, groped their way to bed.

The strange old creature ceased singing after a while, and entered the wigwam. They could distinguish her form as she slowly moved about, before throwing herself down near the entrance to indulge in her usual cat-like sleep. Afraid to speak to her, for they were not quite sure in

what mood she might be, they watched her movements as well as they could, and at last felt sure that she was tottering slowly toward them.

Kitty clasped Rudolph's neck more tightly, and broke into a frightened sob. In an instant, they felt her hand steal very gently over their tumbled curls.

"Night! night!" she whispered softly.

"Good-night, Ka-te-qua," they answered in a breath, for their fear was all gone now.

"Night, night," repeated the voice, as kindly as their own mother could have said it, and after giving each a caressing stroke, their old friend moved softly away.

Very early the next morning the children were awakened by a buzzing of many voices. Ka-te-qua had been found lying stiff and cold at the entrance of her wigwam. Not a trace of injury of any kind was upon her. The Indians, crowding round, shook their heads gravely. Ka-te-qua was wise, they said, but Manitou* had sent for her. She had gone to the happy Hunting Grounds of her fathers.

XI.

FIRE-WATER BECOMES MASTER.

AFTER a long absence, the hunting party returned. As soon as Po-no-kah's stalwart form appeared in sight, Rudolph and Kitty rushed, with a cry of joy, to meet him; but, to their great dismay, he pushed them away with a frown and a grunt that told them plainly that they were to be familiar with him no more. Poor children!—Ka-te-qua gone, Po-no-kah changed, and Tom scarcely heeding them,—they felt friendless indeed. Kind words they never heard now, and kind looks rarely, except when Tom threw them a hasty glance that warmed their hearts, though they scarcely knew why. They did not know how his feelings yearned towards them, nor how eagerly he would have joined in all their simple pursuits, had he dared to do so; but the poor fellow had discovered that any notice he took of the children aroused suspicion, and he therefore concluded to pursue a prudent course.

In the meantime the children had one great

joy. Their love for each other was always the same. Kitty trusted in the belief that "mammy" would send for them; but Rudolph looked ever up to the Great Love that he knew was watching over them and the dear ones at home.

"If it's *right*, Kitty," he would whisper, "I *know* we'll go home one of these days. Don't be afraid. God will take care of us."

"But Dod took Te-qua away," Kitty would sometimes say.

"Yes, I know He did, Kitty," and Rudolph's eyes would look sadly up to the blue sky, "I know He did, but then I think she was tired and wanted to go."

Summer, autumn, and winter had passed away, and now came the season when the Indians carried their largest supply of furs and skins to sell in the city far over the prairies. Often, after their hunts, they had met with traders, and exchanged the skins they had taken for such articles as the white man had to give—guns, blankets, knives, powder, pipes, and fire-water;* but this was the grand trading excursion of the year.

* Brandy, rum, and all alcoholic liquors.

When the party returned, after a few weeks' absence, they brought with them among other things, a keg of whisky. After the first welcome was over, the savages held a council.

It was soon evident that a fearful scene was to be enacted. The prisoners had seen something of the kind before, but never on so large a scale as this.

The Indians had decided to hold a revel, in which nearly all the men were to drink fire-water until they could take no more.

Even these savages knew the horrible consequences of parting with their wits in this manner. Before the drinking commenced, they appointed a few able-bodied Indians who were to remain sober and take care of the rest. They then deprived themselves of all their dangerous weapons—tomahawks, clubs, guns, arrows, and knives, and prepared for their fearful riot.

The scene that followed need not be described.

Soon the confusion became fearful. The few sober chiefs were constantly risking their lives in their efforts to prevent mischief. Squaws were screaming, and frightened children were hiding in every direction.

Tom, who was half forgotten in the general excitement, saw Po-no-kah whisper hurriedly to

one of the women. In a moment she caught Rudolph and Kitty by their hands and stole cautiously with them into the forest. Tom's suspicions were aroused. He started up only to feel a strong arm force him back to the log upon which he had been seated.

"No move!" muttered a voice, close by his ear. "Soon come.—Be very drunk."

In a few moments, while the tumult and uproar were at their height, Tom saw Po-no-kah reeling toward the forest.

Wondering what the fellow meant to do, yet filled with a wild hope, Tom watched his chance, staggered past the rioters, and managed to follow the warrior by another path, without creating any suspicion.

When, at last, they met, Po-no-kah had Rudolph and Kitty in his arms, and, staggering no more, was hurrying through the forest, armed with bow, quiver, and traveling pouch. The astonished prisoner, after taking Kitty from his companion's arms, followed him in silence. Not for hours did Po-no-kah look back or speak, and then it was but to say a few broken words:

"Po-no-kah was hungry. The father of the little pale-faces fed him. Po-no-kah no snake—he remember—Po-no-kah take 'em home."

XII

SHOWING HOW THE BAG OF POTATOES CAME
BACK AGAIN.

FARMER HEDDEN was busily at work in the fields, looking ten years older than on that sunny day, nearly a year before, when he had shouted a laughing "good-bye" to Tom and the little ones.

Bessie was trudging alone from school, wondering why the birds sang less sweetly than they did the May before, and wishing that the noble dog that bounded by her side looked a little more like the first Bouncer.

Mrs. Hedden sat with her brother in the lonely cottage, talking on the old, old theme; the memory of that terrible night had never left her heart.

"No, no, Robert," she said at length, in reply to some appeal from her brother, "we must not go. I know it would be better for us to sell out and go to Philadelphia. But it cannot be; we must never leave this spot."

"Surely, Betsy," urged her brother, "you cannot be so wild as to suppose—"

"No!" she interrupted, "I never dare even hope for that now. I know my lost darlings are not in this world, and yet—and yet why not hope? why not think that perhaps—"

A shadow fell upon the threshold. What wonder that the mother sprang forward with a cry of joy! What wonder that Farmer Hedden, looking from the field, came bounding toward the house! Po-no-kah was there—Po-no-kah and little Kitty!

Laughing,—crying,—clasping her dear Kitty frantically to her heart, then gazing at her at arms' length, Mrs. Hedden raised her eyes to the Indian, and gasped faintly—

"Rudolph? the boy—is he—"

She could say no more.

"Yes—boy all good," answered Po-no-kah, eagerly, "white man say break heart see two—he here."

Just then Farmer Hedden, Tom Hennessy, and Rudolph rushed in.

Oh, what a meeting that was! And Bessie, too, was there before they knew it. Such laughter—such tears—such shouts of rejoicing had never been known in the Hedden cottage before!

Soon the barking of a dog was heard. Rudolph sprang from his father's arms:

"Oh, it's Bouncer!" he cried; "let me see him. Here, Bouncer!"

Bouncer indeed came leaping in at the call, but it was not *the* Bouncer, though it was a great, shaggy fellow, worthy of the name.

Rudolph started back; the dog, too, eyed him with a suspicious look.

"That isn't Bouncer! Where is he, mother?" exclaimed the poor boy, looking up with a bewildered glance.

Po-no-kah slunk aside.

"Do tell me where Bouncer is," he repeated.

"We are all here but him. Here, Bouncer! Bouncer!" and he ran to the door.

Bessie wound her arms about his neck.

"Rudolph, darling," she sobbed, "don't cry. Bouncer was killed on *that* day. He saved my life, Rudolph—"

"Bouncer dead!" screamed the boy.

Just then the new dog, seeing Bessie and her brother so close together, felt that he had a right there, too. With many a frantic leap and bound he endeavored to draw Rudolph's attention, until, finally, the tearful eyes of the boy were turned upon him. Then, if ever a dog tried to do his best, that fellow did. He sprang into the air, barked, tumbled, leaped, whined, wagged his tail till it almost spun, and, finally,

licked Rudolph in the face until the chubby cheeks shook with laughter.

All this time Tom's Indian dress had scarcely been noticed. At last Mrs. Hedden, grasping both his hands, exclaimed :

"Why, what in the world have you been doing with yourself? I knew you, though, the moment you came in. Oh, Tom, how you have suffered!"

Tom tried to answer her; but somehow his great faithful heart was overflowing, and he could only look at her with a tearful smile.

"That's nothing," he said at length. "It's all ended well, anyhow. But a fellow can't help thinking of his own folks, dead and gone, when he sees such a meeting as this."

Mr. Hedden, who had been talking with Po-no-kah, walked over to Tom and placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"*We* are your folks now, my faithful fellow. God bless you! I can never repay what I owe you. Remember, our home is yours from this hour. I shall take no denial."

"Good!" exclaimed Bessie, clapping her hands; "now I shall have two brothers!"

Mrs. Hedden, who had listened to Po-no-kah's broken words, kissed and hugged Tom in her motherly way. "Dear me," she ex-

claimed, "how can we make you look like a white man again; and to think you have had chances to escape and would not leave the children," and then she hugged him again.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, nodding his head and holding up three fingers—to signify that Tom had had three chances.

"Pooh!" said the brave fellow, blushing through all the red paint, "I didn't have any at all until a month or so ago, and I'd got kind o' used to staying then."

Soon the red man turned to go. In vain the grateful parents tried to force their gifts upon him, and to persuade him to at least partake of some refreshment after his long journey.

He pointed to his hunting-pouch and his bow, as if to say that they would furnish all the food he required, and nodded westward to show that he must be far on his way before sundown.

As Tom gave him a hearty hand-shake and the rest crowded about him, all, even to little Kitty, thanking him over and over again, he waved them off with dignity.

"No thank," he said; "Po-no-kah was cold and hungry; the father of the young pale-faces gave him food. He come tell white man Indian no forget."

Tom expressed anxiety lest their deliverer should suffer for his act when he returned to his tribe.

"Po-no-kah no fraid," answered the Indian grimly, with almost a smile upon his face. And, nodding farewell to little Kitty, he strode majestically away.

A year later, the Heddens settled on a fine farm near Philadelphia. Rudolph and Kitty doubtless walked many a time by the old Hall where our Declaration of Independence was signed.

Bessie Hedden's sons when they grew up became pioneers themselves; and their names were Hennessy; so you see the maiden probably, in the course of time, changed her mind about having Tom for a brother.

